Sandy, Todd Heim

Volume 2

TODD RELATIVES

Todd Family

Emilie Todd Helm

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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LINCOLN'S WIFE'S SISTER.

She Is Now the Postmaster of a Town in Kentucky.

Movement on the Part of an Anti-Cleveland Congressman and Senator to Have Her Place Filled by Another—North Atlantic Squadron to Have Fleet Evolutions.

(Special Dispatch to the Boston Herald.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 2, 1894. Within a few days the President must nominate some one to be postmaster at Elizabethtown, Ky. The present encumbent is Mrs. Ben Hardin Helm, a sister of the wife of President Abraham Lincoln. Mrs. Helm is a much younger woman than her sister, and Mr. Lincoln loved her with all the devotion he could have bestowed on a daughter, and his affection for his brother-in-law, her husband, was that of a father for a son.

In 1861, Ben Hardin Helm, a grandson of that Ben Hardin who for years was a leader in Congress and characterized by John Randolph of Roanoke as "a kitchen knife whetted on a brickbat," was a young West Pointer, who had been graduated from the military academy with distinguished honors. His father had been Governor of Kentucky, was president of the Louisville & Nashville railroad, and was destined to be Governor of Kentucky again.

Young Helm first saw the light of day but a short distance from the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, whose wife's sister was to become his wife. Mr. Lincoln strove by all the means in his power to attach Helm to the Union side. After the inauguration in 1861 he sent for Helm, and, laying his hand affectionately on his shoulder, said: "Much as Kentucky is to me, I'd rather see the whole state go South than that you should go. I know you will never fight against the South, but I'll make you paymaster-general, or I'll send you abroad in the diplomatic service, in any station you choose. I can't bear that you and I should become public enemies."

Helm had fathomed Lincoln's great character, and loved and respected him as he deserved, but Helm was every inch a southern man, and cast his lot with his people. In September, 1863, he was commander of the "Kentucky brigade," known as the "orphan brigade," of the confederate army of the West, because so many of its commanders had fallen on the field. It was to the West what the "Stonewall" brigade was to the East. At Chickamauga it was ordered to make a desperate charge, and in that charge Helm fell to rise no more.

Years passed, and in 1881 Robert Lincoln, Mrs. Helm's nephew, became secretary of war, and, though his aunt was a Democrat, he secured her appointment as postmaster at Elizabethtown. Mr. Cleveland reappointed her, and so did President Harrison.

Her term will expire the 9th inst., and, notwithstanding the department is officially advised that the administration of her office is first class, an effort is being made to retire her. Congressman Montgomery, whose official head fell last November in a district overwhelmingly Democratic, wants the place for one of his henchmen, and it is surmised that he is backed by Senator Blackburn, who recently laid down the doctrine that the right of the congressman to appoint postmasters is unlimited and inalienable. The senator and the congressman are close political allies, and both are recognized as anti-Cleveland men. If Montgomery should succeed in having Mrs. Helm removed, doubtless the senator will see that her successor is confirmed. There may be some senators left in Congress, however, who love the memory of Abraham Lincoln enough to stand by the woman he loved, a confederate widow though she be, and senatorial courtesy to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Lincolnsand the Helms. 1897

A long interview with the widow of Gen. Ben Hardin Helm, published in the New Orleans Picayune, recalls the fact that by his marriage with Mary Todd, Abraham Lincoln was brought into close relations with a prominent Southern family, many members of which later took up arms against the Nation in whose preservation he was to have so large a share. Mrs. Lincoln was the half sister of Mrs. Helm, and the latter recalls distinctly all the circumstances of the president's courtship and of his wedding. She says that many of the biographies are inaccurate in the details they give in regard to both, and denies that Lincoln had gone through a disastrous sentimental experience before he wedded Miss Todd. She asserts, too, that the president and his wife were always in the highest degree sympathetic, and that their life together was more than ordinarily happy. Speaking of her own husband, Mrs. Helm says that he and Lincoln were close friends before the breaking out of the war and when hostilities began the president offered the young Kentuckian, who was then a practicing lawyer, the position of paymaster, with the rank of major, if he would cast his fortunes with the North. Young Helm consulted with Robert E. Lee, then a colonel, found that he had just resigned his commission in the Union army, and soon decided to make the fate of the South his own. Helm rose to be a brigadier general and was killed at Chickamauga. Of Mrs. Helm's brothers, one fell at Shiloh, another at Baton Rouge, and a third, who was also in the Confederate service, survived the war. Mrs. Helm is described by the interviewer as "a typical Southern-bred woman, every line and lineament of feature denoting aristocracy of birth and rearing. Her head is crowned with a wealth of silver hair, but her face is young and singularly sweet, and the complexion is as fresh and pink, almost, as that of a young girl. Her voice is exceedingly soft and low, and posseses that musical rhythm characteristic of the true Southern woman." She speaks with sincerest appreciation of Lincoln's greatness of heart and mind, and in discussing him shows no trace of the bitterness her personal losses by the war might have excused.

1895

MRS. LINCOLN'S SISTER.

Politics Liable to Force Her Out of the Elizabethtown, Ky., Post Office.

Within a few days the President must nominate someone to be Postmaster at Elizabethtown, Ky., and the matter threatens to become somewhat national in importance, though Elizabethtown is only a village in Hardin County. The present incumbent is Mrs. Ben Hardin Helm, a sister of the wife of President Abraham Lincoln. Mrs. Helm is a much younger woman than her sister, and Mr. Lincoln loved her with all the devotion he could have bestowed on a daughter, and his affection for his brother-in-law, her husband, was that of a father for a son.

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209 Church Street
New Haven, Conn.

Mr. Louis A Warren,
Zionsville, Ind.

Dear Mr. Warren:

Do you know whether there is available any sort of authentic history of the Todd family in Kentucky? I am making a study of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, and find so many inconsistencies in the statements about the family that I am wondering if in your investigations you may not have come across some publication about the Todds which will clear up my questions?

I have read with much interest your recent article on Lincoln's parentage, and the Springfield people tell me you are going to issue a book this fall; I am eagerly awaiting it, and I shall be grateful for any lead you may give me about the Todds.

Very truly yours,

Maude Humphrey,

September twentieth

47 Workshop
Yale University,

Humphreys, Nada

Todd Family

September 24, 1926

Naud Humphrey
309 Church St.
New Haven, Conn.

My dear Madam:

Your inquiry relative to the Todd Family of Kentucky is before me. I fear that I cannot be of much assistance to you but I am positive that a discussion such as you contemplate would be timely following the death of Robert Lincoln.

About three or four years ago I called on Mrs. Emily Helm, of near Lexington, Kentucky, a half sister of Mrs. Lincoln. Whether or not she is still living I do not know. She is reluctant about being interviewed, but in the conversation which I had with her she denied many of the current traditions about Mary Todd. I enclose a photograph of the home in which she was then living with her son. You may keep the print as I have the negative.

What Mrs. Helm knew was set forth in a magazine article in September 1898 under the caption "Mary Todd Lincoln." This is the most valuable source material we have on the history of the Todd family. I have some extracts from the article but failed to cite the magazine. I think it was the Atlantic. You can easily find it however if you do not already have it. It is the only valuable source material of which I am advised.

My book "Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood," is now off the press. It might be of some assistance to you, but I do not discuss the Todd family. It is published by the Century Company and sells for $3.50.

Please call upon me if I can be of any assistance.

Yours respectfully

Sunday
The 3rd

Dear Mr. Warren:

Thank you for your very kind reply to my letter, and your answers to my questions about Mrs. Lincoln. I have read the Mrs. Helm article, and every thing else in print, I think, but there is so much that

has never yet been printed,
and, as you say, now that Mr.
Robert Lincoln is gone, it may
flood the market. It was
nice of you to send the
Kodak picture; if the Todd
home in Lexington was like
that, it will make fine
background for a play.

The New York papers are
announcing your book
this week. I know I shall
enjoy reading it.

Very truly yours
Maude Humphrey

209 Church St New Haven.

April 17- 1929.

725 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Mr. Louis A. Warren
Lincoln National Life
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Mr. Warren:

The enclosed card which I have filled out, is really just to remind you that I am still interested in the study of Mrs. Lincoln, about whom I am writing a play. You were kind enough to send me some helpful suggestions and pictures some time ago; if you come across data which you think I may not have seen, I would greatly appreciate your letting me know about it: tho' I know the mass of material flooding the market of late, most of it is not at all interesting to me, nor is it, I believe, authentic.

It would give me great pleasure to meet you personally, some time, if you are in Springfield; Miss Osbourn of the library hopes you may be, this spring.

Very truly yours,
Maude Humphrey.

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April 23, 1929
Dict. April 22

Miss Maud Humphrey
725 South Seventh Street
Springfield, Illinois

My dear Madam:

Your letter and the enclosed card was greatly appreciated. I am glad that you are still interested in contributing to our knowledge of Lincoln.

I shall be in Springfield next Sunday and speak at the First Christian Church Sunday evening on Lincoln's religious background.

I trust I will have the privilege of meeting you on this visit.

Respectfully yours.

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

LAW:EB

many times

Mrs. Emily Helm
Lexington, Ky.

My dear Mrs. Helm :

For a long time I have been intending to visit you again in your home, but although I have been in Lexington on several occasions it has never seemed convenient for me to run out to your home.

If you do not remember me, Mrs. Lewis will when she learns that I formerly lived at Elizabethtown, and have been writing a history of the Lincoln family in Kentucky.

I am now about ready to send this two volumn work to the press. I am anxious to get your corrections in the book on Abraham Lincoln published by Jesse Weik's. I think it was more than a year ago since I sent you the book and it possibly has been misplaced during this interval.

If you still have it I should like very much to have you take and mark out the parts in it referring to Mrs Lincoln which you do not feel to be correct. and send it to me at your earliest convenience that I may use you suggestions in my book.

I trust that you are well and looking forward to another merry christmas. May I add my good wishes to the many you will receive.

My best regards to Mrs Lewis,

Sincerely

MRS. LINCOLN'S LIFE PORTRAYED BY NIECE

Biography Reveals a Widow Beset by Despair and Eager to Join the President in Death.

LETTERS BESPEAK GRIEF

Struggle to Discharge Debts Adds Burden—Note of Queen Victoria Extends Sympathy.

N.Y. Times 4-15-28

The years of suffering which Mrs. Abraham Lincoln endured after the assassination of the Civil War President, her gradual mental breakdown and the distress of her son, the late Robert Todd Lincoln, at having to place her in a sanitarium, are told in letters by members of the Lincoln family included in a new biography of Mrs. Lincoln, "Mary, Wife of Lincoln," by her niece, Kate Helm, which is being published in McCall's Magazine.

The biography includes also a letter of condolence hitherto unpublished, so far as known, from Queen Victoria to Mrs. Lincoln. The letter is apparently in Queen Victoria's own handwriting, on paper deeply bordered with black.

"Osborne.
"April 29, 1865.

"Dear Madame,

"Though a stranger to you I cannot remain silent when so terrible a calamity has fallen upon you and your country, and must personally express my deep and heartfelt sympathy with you under the shocking circumstances of your present dreadful misfortune.

"No one can better appreciate than I can, who am myself utterly broken-hearted by the loss of my own beloved husband, who was the light of my life—my stay, my all—what your sufferings must be, and I earnestly pray that you may be supported by Him to whom alone the sorely stricken can look for comfort, in this hour of heavy affliction.

"With renewed expressions of true sympathy, I remain, dear madam,

"Your sincere friend,
"VICTORIA."

Mrs. Lincoln Tells of Debts.

A letter from Mrs. Lincoln to Orne describes her financial difficulties:

"I told you what my eldest son and I have always kept to ourselves, that as soon as our senses could be regained I had every Washington and every other indebtedness sent to me and out of every dollar I could command I paid to th eutmost farthing. In some cases known to the Administration, but in very few, it was all done by ourselves—my son and myself—out of our money, so it should be said President Lincoln was not in debt. This is one of the causes why I am so straightened now, for living as we were compelled to, my husband not being a rich man, and we had to pay enormous prices for everything those war times."

Of Mrs. Lincoln's financial troubles, her niece says:

"There was a long delay in the settlement of Mr. Lincoln's estate, and by 1867 the $22,000 allotted her by Congress for the President's unfinished term had grown alarmingly less. The bills for unsettled accounts that Mary Lincoln had asked the merchants to send her had come all too promptly and she was overwhelmed at their magnitude; mortified and terror-stricken, too, at her inability to settle her indebtedness, she was dazed and did not know where to turn for help. For at this time Mary was a singularly lonely woman. Due to her mental trouble, which had been daily increasing ever since her husband's death, her former good judgment had become impaired. Her sisters and other relatives who voiced to Mary their indignant protests, entreating her to curb her excitement and excentricity, only incurred her anger and had become estranged from her.

"They did not understand until later the tragic cause, which finally several physicians and a jury of twelve men pronounced insanity. These terrible debts were making her head ache. She felt as if red hot needles were being driven through her brain. Honesty was ingrained in Mary's code of life and these merchants must not suffer loss through her folly. She must sell everything! It would be humiliating! In her extremity and weakness she reverted to the impulse of her childhood, which had been to seek the love and help she had unfailingly found in her black mammy who had shielded her from many a deserved scolding. In the faithful, sympathetic colored woman Elizabeth Keckley, formerly a slave in a good old Virginia family, May saw the only available substitute, and to her she turned blindly for sympathy and advice—with most disastrous results. Mary, with the aid of Elizabeth Keckley, attempted to dispose of laces, frocks everything; it was a dismal failure and brought on her a perfect avalanche of criticism and insult."

Robert Anxious About His Mother.

The anxiety of her son Robert is shown in a letter he wrote on Oct. 16, 1867, to Mary Harlan, whom later he married:

"I have so much to say about what I wrote to you of ten days ago that I hardly know where or how to begin. I was merely desperate, I know. I suppose you have seen some of the papers, so there is no need of detailing what I was told they were full of. I did not read them. The simple truth, which I cannot tell to any one not personally interested, is that my mother is on one subject not mentally responsible. I have suspected this for some time from various indications and now have no doubt of it. I have taken the advice of one or two of my friends in whom I trust most and they tell me I can do nothing. It is terribly irksome to sit still under all that has happened and say nothing, but it has to be done.

"The greatest misery of all is the fear of what may happen in the future. This is of course not to be foreseen, and is what troubles me most. I have no doubt that a great many good and amiable people wonder why I do not take charge of her affairs and keep them straight, but it is very hard to deal with one who is sane on all subjects but one. You could hardly believe it possible, but my mother protests to me that she is in actual want, and nothing I can do or say will convince her to the contraryy. Do you see that I am likely to have a good deal of trouble in the future, do what I can to prevent it?"

Letters which Mrs. Lincoln wrote from Europe in 1869 and 1870 to her daughter-in-law, the wife of Robert Todd Lincoln, testify to the melancholy which she was unable to throw off. There are many such references as:

"I feel miserably blue today, so please excuse this scrawl"; "certainly ill luck presided at my birth—certainly within the last few years it has been a faithful attendant"; "it would have been utterly impossible for me with my present health and sad state of mind to have taken the least interest in Italian cities this Winter"; oh, that I could be with you, for with the lonely life imposed upon myself, separation from those I love so much, at this trying, heart-rending time is excruciating pain."

Tells of Her Anguish.

Again her agony is evidenced in a letter to Mrs. Orne:

"If my darling husband had lived out his four years he promised me we should live our remaining years in a home we both should have enjoyed. * * * Bowed down and broken-hearted in my terrible bereavement, my thoughts this last sad Summer have often turned to you. I have remembered with most grateful emotions your tender sympathy in the first days of my overwhelming anguish. Time does not reconcile me to the loss of the most devoted and loving husband a sadly afflicted woman ever possessed. How dearly I long, my kind friend, to lay my aching head and sorrowing heart by the side of this dearly beloved one. When the summons comes for my departure I will gladly welcome it, for there the weary are at rest. * * * "

Regarding the death of Tad, Mrs. Abraham Lincoln's young son, Robert Tod Lincoln wrote his wife:

"We came back from Springfield this morning all well. I will not attempt to tell you all that has happened in the last few days. For I am a good deal used up. Last Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning Tad appeared a great deal better. He was stronger and looking well and the water was reduced a good deal in his chest. Thursday was very close and oppressive, and it pulled him back very much. Friday afternoon he seemed to rally again and at eleven P. M. was sleeping nicely with prospects of having a good night, so I left him with mother and his two nurses and went to the house. I was aroused at half past four and went to the hotel and saw at once that he was failing fast. He was in great distress and laboring for breath and ease, but I do not think he was in acute pain. He lingered on so until between half past seven and eight, when he suddenly threw himself forward on his bed and was gone. Poor mother was almost distracted, but Mrs. —— devoted herself to her and we took her up to the house. During the day Mrs. ——, Mrs. Farlin and Mrs. Wm. H. Brown and your father came. We had services in the house in the afternoon and at night I went down to Springfield—with a car full of friends. Mother was utterly exhausted and could not go, but Mrs. Dr. Brown stayed with her until I got back. I have a nurse with her and she is doing very well—better than I expected. I hope and expect that in a few days I will get her to go down to Springfield to my Aunt Mrs. Edwards, and I so I will think I have done a good deal."

Mrs. Lincoln in Sanitarium.

Four years later, in May, 1875, Robert Lincoln was compelled to have his mother placed in a sanitarium. This letter from him to Mrs. J. H. Orne indicates his distress:

"Your letter written immediately after you received the news of the proceedings which I was unhappily compelled to take, should have received an earlier reply and I must beg you to excuse my apparent neglect. If you have since then seen any detailed account of the occurrences which forced me to place my mother under care, I think, indeek, know, you could not but have approved my action. Six physicians in council informed me that by longer delay I was making morally responsible for some very probable tragedy, which might occur at any moment. Some of my Eastern friends have criticized the public proceedings in court, which seemed to them unnecessary. Against this there was no help, for we have a statute in this State which imposes

a very heavy penalty on any one depriving an insane person of his liberty without the verdict of a jury. My mother is, I think, under as good care and as happily situated as is possible under the circumstances. She is in the private part of the house of Dr. Patterson and her associates are the members of his family only. With them she walks and drives wherever she likes and takes her meals with them or in her own room as she chooses, and she tells me she likes them all very much. The expression of surprise at my action which was telegraphed East, and which doubtless saw, was the first and last expression of the kind she has uttered and we are on the best of terms. Indeed by consolation in this sad affair is in thinking that she is happier in every way, in her freedom from care and excitement, than she has been in ten years. So far as I can see she does not realize her situation at all. It is, of course, my care that she should have everything for her comfort and pleasure that can be obtained. I can tell you nothing as to the probability of her restoration. It must be the work of some time if it occurs. Her physician who is of high repute is not yet able to give an opinion. The responsibility that has been and is now on me is one that I would gladly share if it was possible to do so, but being alone as I am, I can only do my duty as it is given me to see it. Trusting that I am guided for the best."

Declared Sane Within Year.

At the end of eleven months Mary Lincoln was declared sane, her niece continues. Her sister, Elizabeth (Mrs. Edwards), went to the sanitarium at Batavia and accompanied by her sister and a trained nurse Mary went back to Springfield. She was depressed and unhappy. "I cannot endure to meet my former friends, Lizzie," she said bitterly, "they will never cease to regard me as a lunatic, I feel it in their soothing manner. If I should say the moon is made of green cheese they would heartily and smilingly agree with me. I love you, but I cannot stay. I would be much less unhappy in the midst of strangers."

Mrs. Edwards, knowing that her sister was far from normal, felt very apprehensive to see her leave, but she put no obstacle in her way; indeed, she came to think that a complete change might be beneficial to her, mentally and physically. So Mary Lincoln, restless, hoping to find forgetfulness in travel abroad, went to France, to Germany, to Italy. At Pau, France, in December, 1879, she fell from a stepladder while hanging a small picture over her mantelpiece and seriously injured her spine. Fearing now that she might die among strangers, in October, 1880, she sailed for America. Her nephew met her in New York and escorted her back to Springfield to the home of her sister, Mrs. Edwards. There, shrinking and sensitive, seeing no one—even when she was persuaded to take a drive the carriage curtains must be drawn—she spent the remainder of her broken, clouded life in the home filled with memories of her sparkling, happy girlhood, her hose-colored dreams of love and life. Prostrated by illness, the light of life and joy blotted out of her, she lingered in a purple twilight of grief until merciful death claimed her—the death she prayed for. "Ah, my dear friends," she wrote, "you will rejoice when you know that I have gone to my husband and children." The end of her suffering came July 16, 1872.

Her friends paid her silent tribute in the same room which had witnessed her light-hearted gaicty and her marriage to the man of her choice, by whose side they reverently laid her. And could she have been conscious, with her slow, irradiating smile she would have said: "At last I am content—happy."

PERSONAL FRIEND OF LINCOLN DIES

Mrs. Emile Todd Helm Succumbs At Lexington At Age 94 Years.

Lexington, Ky., Feb. 20 (AP)—Death has claimed the last surviving person who was intimately associated with Abraham Lincoln.

Mrs. Emile Todd Helm, 94, half-sister of the martyred president's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln and long a close associate of the Civil war president, died at her home in Fayette county near here today.

Mrs. Helm spent months of her early girlhood at the home of Lincoln in Springfield, Ill., and friendship formed then continued during the life of the president. The fact that Mrs. Helm's husband, Brigadier General Ben Hardin Helm, served in the Confederate army did not alter the president's feeling for Mrs. Helm, even though Lincoln previously had offered General Helm a commission in the Union army.

When General Helm was killed in the battle of Chicamauga in 1862, Lincoln invited Mrs. Helm to the White House for an extended visit.

Mrs. Helm had lived for the past twenty years at the Helm place, a colonial residence in Fayette county built by the Revolutionary soldier, Colonel Abraham Bowman. She is survived by one son, Ben Hardin Helm, and two daughters, Katherine Helm, and Mrs. Elodie Lewis, all of whom made their home with her. Katherine Helm is the author of "Mary, Wife of Lincoln."

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THE NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY.
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1930.

EMELIE HELM DEAD; LINCOLN SISTER-IN-LAW

Widow of Confederate General Who Refused Commission From President.

Special to The New York Times.

LEXINGTON, Ky., Feb. 20.—Mrs. Emelie Todd Helm, widow of the Confederate Brigadier General, Ben Hardin Helm, and half sister of Abraham Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, died today at her residence, Helm Place, near Lexington. She was 93 years old.

Her death removes the last person who was closely associated with Abraham Lincoln. During her girlhood, Mrs. Helm spent much time with her sister and brother-in-law at Springfield, Ill., and after her young husband was killed at the Battle of Chickamauga, on Sept. 20, 1863, she went to the White House at President Lincoln's invitation and spent several weeks there.

Mrs. Helm was the daughter of Robert Smith Todd and the former Elizabeth Humphreys, and, like her half sister, was born in the old Todd home here, which still stands on West Main Street.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, President Lincoln called Ben Hardin Helm to the White House and offered him a commission in the Union Army. General Simon Boliver Buckner, old friend of young Helm's father, was at that time raising a brigade for the Confederate Army, and Helm declined the commission offered by Lincoln and joined the forces of the South, rising rapidly to the rank of Brigadier General.

Mrs. Helm lived at Helm Place, with her three children, Ben Hardin Helm, Katherine Helm, the artist and author of "Mary, Wife of Lincoln," and Mrs. Elodie Lewis.

Members of Lexington Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, will attend the funeral on Saturday in a body. The Right Rev. H. P. Almon Abbott, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington, will conduct the services.

HALF SISTER OF MRS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN DIES

LEXINGTON, Ky., Feb. 21.—(I.N.S.)—Mrs. Emile Todd Helm, aged 94, long an intimate friend of Abraham Lincoln, and half sister of his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, was dead today.

Mrs. Helm, who spent years of her girlhood at the Lincoln home in Springfield, Ill., died yesterday at her home in Lafayette County.

The aged woman often told of how the Civil War time President overlooked the fact that her husband, General Ben Helm, fought with the Confederates forces during the campaign. This made no difference in the President's friendship for her, she said.

LOUISVILLE, KY., COURIER-JR.
FEB. 22, 1930 M5

"LITTLE SISTER"

It was a happy turn of fate that Mrs. Ben Hardin Helm, Mary Todd Lincoln's half-sister, should have been spared these many years and that she was able, both verbally and by her diary and correspondence, to correct many false impressions of circumstances surrounding the lives of Abraham Lincoln and his wife in a day when public interest in them runs high. Many books have been written about the Lincolns, husband and wife, in these last ten years, and not the least of them was that of Katherine Helm of Lexington, based largely on her mother's recollections, letters and writings.

Mrs. Helm's death, at the age of 93, removes a woman who was well beloved by the "boys" in gray, at many of whose reunions she had been an honored guest. She was an impressive figure at that time when, after General Helm was killed at Chickamauga and she was granted a pass through the lines from Atlanta, Union officers at Fortress Monroe sought to force her to take the oath of allegiance. Tearfully, yet firmly, the young widow refused. The authorities communicated with Lincoln, who had granted the pass. "Send her to me," wired the President, and Mrs. Helm went to the White House, to be reunited with her sister.

"I had just lost my husband," she wrote in her diary, "Mary had lost her son, Willie, and we both had lost three fine, young brothers in the ranks of the Confederate army."

Lincoln was very fond of "Little Sister," as he had called Emilie Helm ever since that day in 1847 when, returning from Congress, he visited the Todd home at Lexington and gave her that pet name as he caught her up and held her at a terrifying height from the floor. Mary Todd was very fond of this child, and because of her confidences, the younger sister was able, in later years, to refute the cruel story first told by William Herndon that Lincoln had failed to appear at his own wedding, supposedly planned for January 1, 1841.

It was in April, 1861, that Lincoln offered Ben Hardin Helm, then 30 years old and ten years out of West Point, a paymaster's commission in the Union Army, with the rank of major. That same day in Washington Ben Helm talked to Robert E. Lee and learned he had resigned his commission. Helm's father, Gov. John L. Helm, was a slave owner, but a Union man. Mary wanted her beautiful sister to live in the White House with her. The place offered Helm was much coveted and Helm realized his opportunity might readily lead to advancement. He thanked Lincoln and asked for time. Returning to Kentucky he was convinced by Simon Bolivar Buckner that he should cast his lot with the Confederacy, and so he wrote the President after "a bitter struggle with myself." Two years later Lincoln broke the sad news of Ben Helm's death to his wife, then in New York, and Senator David Davis described the President as much moved by the tragedy. "Davis," he said, "I feel as David of old did when he was told of the death of Absolom." Lincoln's affection was even deeper for "Little Sister," even though while at the White House and until the surrender she remained a "loyal little rebel" to the last.

Mrs. Helm's Quinine.

Biographies of Mrs. BEN HARDIN HELM, who died Thursday, recalled the fact that she was the last surviving person who had been closely acquainted with ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and also recorded the circumstance that she spent several weeks at the White House during the civil war. An interesting interpretation of the significance of this visit is set forth in an anecdote in Dr. WILLIAM E. BARTON'S recent book, "Lincoln at Gettysburg."

Mrs. HELM was the half-sister of MARY TODD LINCOLN, the President's wife; she was also a strong Southern sympathizer. Her husband was a Brigadier-General in the Confederate army. It is said that at the outbreak of the war President LINCOLN offered to BEN HARDIN HELM a commission in the Union army, which HELM declined. Later HELM joined the Southern forces; he was killed in the battle of Chickamauga. It was while Mrs. HELM was visiting the Lincolns at the White House that she is asserted to have performed a valuable service for the Southern army. Dr. BARTON tells the story:

> "Mrs. EMILY TODD HELM . . . came through the Confederate lines to the White House under a flag of truce. She was a soul in bereavement. . . . The Lincoln family was in a strait betwixt two deep emotions—sympathy for the bereaved little sister and stern loyalty to duty, together with no little concern regarding the spying and misrepresentation that were then in full vogue concerning Mrs. LINCOLN'S own loyalty to her country."

One object of Mrs. HELM'S visit is disclosed in a quotation from the diary of Senator BROWNING of Illinois:

> "The President told me his sister-in-law, Mrs. HELM, was in the White House, but he did not wish it known. She wished an order for the protection of some cotton she had in Jackson, Mississippi. He thought she ought to have it, but he was afraid that he would be censured if he did so."

Mrs. HELM got the order, says Dr. BARTON, and returned to her home in Kentucky with a pass from LINCOLN. But the details of her journey evidently were never known by the President. "I do not know what LINCOLN himself would have said," says Dr. BARTON, "if he had known how much quinine for Southern hospitals she took back sewed in her petticoats."

NEW YORK CITY SUN
FEBRUARY 22, 1930

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

Those Who Knew Lincoln.

The death at Lexington, Ky., a few days ago of LINCOLN'S sister-in-law, Mrs. BEN HARDIN HELM, crosses from the small list another of those who knew the War President well. Although the widow of a Confederate Brigadier, Mrs. HELM spent some weeks in the White House at Washington after his death, the guest of her half-sister, Mrs. LINCOLN. The TODDS, like many Kentucky families, had members in uniforms on both sides of the conflict: Mr. LINCOLN had, in fact, offered to General HELM a commission in the Union Army, which he refused. He died at Chickamauga at the head of his command, the "Orphan Brigade," so called because it lost many commanders in battle. Its last leader, General JOSEPH LEWIS of Glasgow, Ky., lived to become Chief Justice of the State and died in the '90s.

The Kentucky Progress Magazine—from a constituency which retained many close ties with its great native son until his death—reprints a letter which DENNIS HANKS, the President's cousin and playmate, wrote to HERNDON, LINCOLN'S law partner, in 1865 after the assassination. In his previous letter, said HANKS, "My Ink was frose. * * * We used to play 4 Corner Bull pen and what we cald cat * * * and throwing a mall over our Shoulders Backwards hopping and half hamen, Resling and so on." HANKS continued:

> We ust to Sing "Hail Columbia Happy Land, If you aint Broke I will Be Damned," and "The turpen turk that Scorns the world and Struts aBout with his whiskers Curld for No other man But himself to See," and all such as this. ABE youst to try to Sing pore old Ned but he Never could Sing Much.

This is a statement of fact which the President himself once said it was impossible to deny.

FEB 25 1930

Mrs. Lincoln Birthday.

Seneca Eagle - 9-7-30

Mrs. Ben Hardin Helm, widow of the Confederate general, and only surviving sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln, died at her home near Lexington, Ky., on Feb. 20. Mrs. Helm, who was in her 94th year, had been in apparently good health until about 10 days ago, when weakness of the heart developed.

Her three children, Ben Helm, Miss Katherine Helm and Mrs. Walter Lewis, were at her bedside. Mrs Helm possessed many heirlooms, personal letters and historical records connected with the martyred president and his wife, and for several years her home has been a mecca for literary people and tourists interested in Lincoln traditions.

Last of Intimates of Lincoln Passed at 94

Death has claimed the last surviving person who was intimately associated with Abraham Lincoln, before and after his elevation to the high office of President.

Mrs. Emile Todd Helm, ninety-four, half sister of the martyred President's wife Mary Todd Lincoln, and long a close associate of the Civil war President, died at her home in Fayette county, last year.

Mrs. Helm had spent months of her early girlhood at the home of Lincoln in Springfield, Ill., and a friendship formed then continued during the life of the President. The fact Mrs. Helm's husband, Brig. Gen. Ben Hardin Helm, served in the Confederate army against Lincoln's forces did not alter the President's feeling for Mrs. Helm. He offered General Helm a commission in the Union army.

Mrs. Helm lived for the last 20 years at the Helm place, a Colonial residence in Fayette county built by the Revolutionary soldier, Col. Abraham Bowman. Mt Union Times (Pa.) Feb. 13-1931

The Helm place is six miles from Lexington-was built in 1787 by a retired English Army Officer- was purchased by Robert Todd about 1820.- he was then a Banker in Lexingron. He moved there with his family and lived in the house until his death. Mrs. Lincoln lived there until she left for Springfield where she met Lincoln and was married. When the Lincolns went back to Lexington visiting after their marriage they stayed in this house and books in the bookcases have notes on their margins in Lincolns' hand writing which he made while staying in the house.

It is a Colonial house-lovely- filled with nothing but furniture used by the Todd family- nothing modern in the whole house.

The Helm family consists of three people at this time- two daughters and a son of Emily Todd Helm. Mrs. Helm died some three or four years ago. She was a sister of Mrs. Lincoln- they had different mothers- I think Mr. Todd had three wives. At the close of the War Mrs. Helm was left with these three children, the oldest four years old. She was poor and interested friends helped her along. I think at one time she was Post Mistress in a town near Louisville. - she finally adquired the Todd home thru settlements of the estates with different members of her family and lived there with her children until she died. The place is now known as Helm place. One of the daughters married but is a widow, the other daughter and the son have not married. Miss Katherine Helm the maiden sister wrote a book a few years ago about "My Aunt Mary Todd Lincoln " (this may not be quite the correct name for it). She is charming as well as are the other sister and brother. They live as the Robert Todd Lincolns did in Washington quietly and the public of course does not have access to this home.

So many interesting stories of this family- I am sure I have told you of some of them. About the negro boy who accompanied their father to War. Mr. Helm was a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army and was killed at the battle of Chicamauga. One very interesting fact not generally known is that Mrs. Helm was a guest of the Lincolns at the White House during the blackest time of the War. From this visit came the stories about Mrs. Lincoln furnishing drugs (quinine) etc to the Southern Army as it was said Mrs. Helm carried the drugs concealed in her dress when she left the White House. Mrs. Helm of course was not guilty of this but the feeling against Mrs. Lincoln was so intense that anything her enemies could find to use against her was used.

HELM MEMORIAL MONUMENT

3½

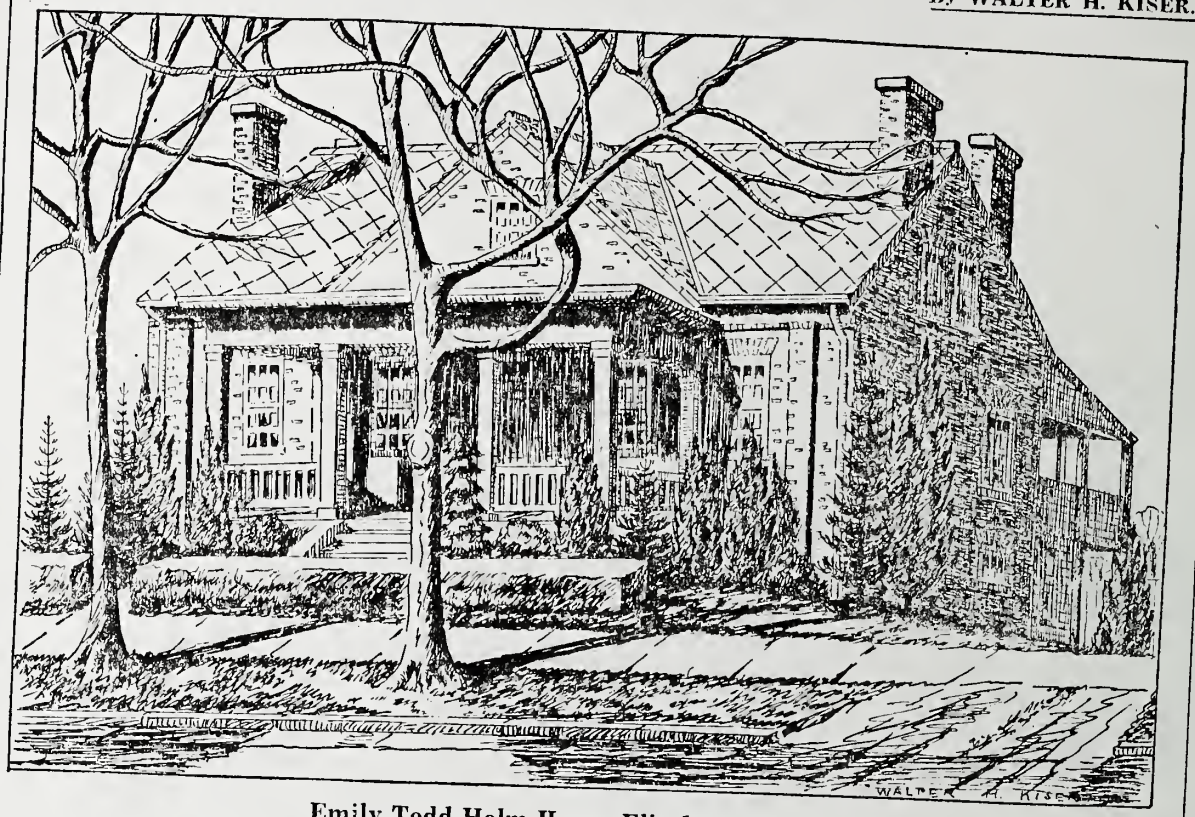
full page length

Chattanooga Sunday Times. Dec 6 1936.

not to exceed 6" wide

Neighborhood Sketches

By WALTER H. KISER.



Emily Todd Helm Home, Elizabethtown, Ky.

BUILT about 1820 by Mrs. Elizabeth McKinney, this roomy, dignified old gray brick home later was purchased by Mrs. Emily Todd Helm, widow of Confederate General Ben Hardin Helm and half sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of the President. Mrs. Helm was living here when, in 1881, President Arthur appointed her postmistress of Elizabethtown, an office she held for several years.

John Y. Hill, who built many of the early brick dwellings in Elizabethtown, supervised the construction for Mrs. McKinney, using bricks made on the place. Charles Wesley Quiggins, later a Major in the Union Army during the War Between the States, fashioned the handmade woodwork.

There are nine rooms and two halls, including a wide front hall leading to a handsome stairway to the upper floor. Large open fireplaces give an atmosphere of cozy warmth to spacious front rooms on either side of the main hallway. Door and window facings, wide at the bottom, taper toward the top. A basement of four rooms and hall is used as servants' quarters.

The home is now occupied by the Hobson L. James family.

Next Monday—The Clarkson Place, Big Spring, Ky.

Old Kentucky Homes and Gardens

BY ELIZABETH PATTERSON THOMAS

HELM PLACE

At the turn of the Bowman's Mill Pike from the Lexington-Harrodsburg Road is the majestic old Helm Place Seated on the porch is Mrs. Emily Todd Helm, the half-sister of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln

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(Description of Cover)

Portico of Stewart Home Training School, Frankfort, with Ginkgo tree presented by Henry Clay

A De Lu

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Elizabeth Patterson Thomas is the wife of Justice Augustus Thomas of the Court of Appeals of Kentucky. Her interesting background has ably qualified her to gather together the material necessary for this book. Dr. William M. Patterson, the father of the author, was a Methodist missionary to Mexico and Venezuela, and a man of extraordinary culture. Mrs. Thomas spent much of her early life in Mexico, during its most colorful period, the last years of Porfirio Diaz. Our author possesses the rare faculty of being able to communicate to others with unusual fluency all the knowledge she has gained from her liberal studies. Her cultural background includes associations with diplomats and statesmen of many lands. As the author of Old Kentucky Homes and Gardens, Mrs. Thomas has made a valuable contribution to the archives of historical societies on colonial homes and gardens, and the Garden Clubs of America on past and present gardens in the South.

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Old Kentucky Homes and Gardens

by Elizabeth Patterson Thomas

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VII. Other Old Homes in Kentucky

The spiral staircase at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Price

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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LINCOLN'S REBEL BROTHER-IN-LAW

BY DON RUSSELL.

In the midst of another war that bids fair to last as long, it is natural that we should make comparisons with the times of Abraham Lincoln — particularly because of our idolization of the Civil War President. And on this 135th Lincoln Birthday there will be many parallels drawn.

But there is one trial Lincoln met with which his successors in time of war have not had to contend. Members of his wife's family were arrayed against him. Indeed one of them, the husband of Mrs. Lincoln's half-sister, became a brigadier general in the Confederacy. This was Ben Hardin Helm, whose biography has been written by R. Gerald McMurtry (Civil War Round Table, Chicago, $3.50).

Lincoln and Helm had much in common and had been close friends. Both were lawyers; both were Whig politicians. Helm's father had been a governor of Kentucky. His mother's father had been Senator Ben Hardin, so he came of distinguished Kentucky parentage. He was appointed to West Point in 1847, was graduated ninth in his class in 1851 and served for a time in the 2d Dragoons.

(Incidentally, Mr. McMurtry has confused 2d Dragoons and 2d Cavalry, which is not surprising. The 2d Cavalry of which Robert E. Lee was lieutenant colonel was formed in 1855, so was not the same as Helm's regiment, for at that time we had both a 2d Dragoons and a 2d Cavalry. In 1861 the mounted regiments were all designated cavalry and the 2d Dragoons (Helm's) then became the 2d Cavalry and the old 2d Cavalry (Lee's) became the 5th Cavalry.

Helm resigned his commission because of ill health, and it was while he was a member of the legislature that he met and married Emilie Todd, daughter of Robert S. Todd.

Since Kentucky did not secede, Helm for a time could not decide his future course. Although he had not supported Lincoln, he visited the President at Washington and was offered a commission as major in the paymaster's department. After consulting Lee and others he declined, and went home to accept a position in the militia during the period when Kentucky was attempting to maintain neutrality. But eventually he recruited the 1st Kentucky Cavalry for the Confederate Army and became its colonel, with which organization he fought in the campaign of Shiloh. He was then commissioned brigadier general, and after holding other assignments, took command of the 1st Kentucky Brigade which was commonly known as the Orphan Brigade because it never retained a commander long enough to be known by his name. Helm was killed at the Battle of Chicka-

There were several incidents of Lincoln interest in connection with the subsequent life of Mrs. Helm. She was in Atlanta at the time of her husband's death and he was buried there. President Lincoln issued a pass to Mrs. Todd, stepmother of Mrs. Lincoln, to allow her to go to Atlanta, and another allowing them to proceed north. But at Fortress Monroe Mrs. Helm was halted because she refused to take an oath of allegiance, and Lincoln ordered that she be brought on to Washington. There then occurred the strange spectacle of the widow of an enemy general actually visiting in the White House! There was naturally some scandal about it.

She stayed only about a week, and then returned to her Kentucky home, still unreconstructed. Lincoln subsequently issued an order revoking his pass on a report that she had committed disloyal acts, but apparently the report was exaggerated and she did not learn of his disclaimer until many years later. She survived until 1930.

Confederate General Ben Hardin Helm: Kentucky Brother In-Law Of Abraham Lincoln

A Condensation of the Original Study

By

R. Gerald McMurtry, Litt.D., L.L.D.

Director

THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE FOUNDATION

Fort Wayne, Indiana

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Address at Annual Meeting

LINCOLN FELLOWSHIP OF WISCONSIN

Madison

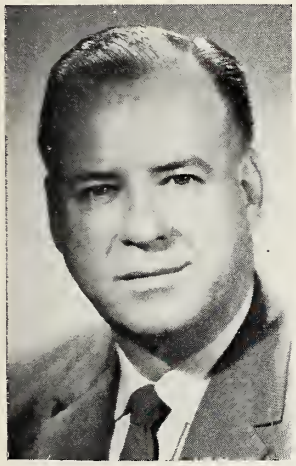
February 12, 1958

Historical Bulletin No. 17
1959

INTRODUCING R. GERALD McMURTRY

THE AUTHOR of this address on "Ben Hardin Helm" is expertly qualified by a background of more than a quarter century of study of the Kentucky-born exemplar—Abraham Lincoln. Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry is a native of Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky, the community where Lincoln's parents set up housekeeping and the county where Abraham himself was born.

A graduate of Centre College, Dr. McMurtry has been recognized with honorary degrees by his alma mater and by Iowa Wesleyan College. He is a member of the New York and Chicago Civil War Round Tables and of the Sons of the American Revolution.



Since 1931 he has been actively engaged in historical research dealing with the many phases of the life and career of our sixteenth President. He is the author of about twenty-five books and pamphlets and of approximately two hundred magazine articles on Lincoln and his contemporaries.

For many years Dr. McMurtry edited The Lincoln Herald, quarterly magazine of Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate, Tennessee, where for nineteen years he was director of the Department of Lincolniana and directed what is said to be the largest collection of literature pertaining to the Civil War period to be found in any institution of higher learning. In June, 1958, he received from Lincoln Memorial the "Lincoln Diploma of Honor" for high service in the interpretation of the life, deeds, and immortality of Abraham Lincoln.

It was from such a background that, in 1956, Dr. McMurtry was selected to succeed the eminent Lincoln authority, Dr. Louis A. Warren, as director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation at Fort Wayne, Indiana, his present work. The Foundation is a center of Lincoln information where are to be found approximately 200,000 items, including books and pamphlets, exclusively of Lincoln character, numbering about 9,000.

Dr. McMurtry received national attention in the Saturday Evening Post of February 16, 1947, when his work at the Foundation and its museum was featured in a lengthy illustrated article.

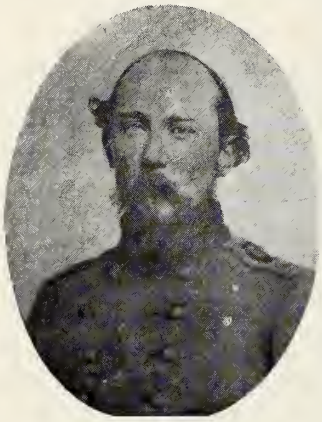
He is currently serving as a member of the Indiana Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission by governor's appointment, and of the National Sesquicentennial Commission by President Eisenhower's appointment.—L. W. B.

CONFEDERATE GENERAL BEN HARDIN HELM: KENTUCKY BROTHER-IN-LAW OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By R. Gerald McMurtry

On September 24, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln sent a telegram to his wife, who was then residing at the Fifth Avenue Hotel while on a visit to New York City. In terse sentences he told her of the "late battle between Rosecrans and Bragg" in which "we are worsted." As to the casualties he informed his wife rather unsympathetically, because in a telegram he could not well afford to show any sympathy for a rebel general, that "your brother-in-law, Helm" was among those killed in the engagement.

Nevertheless the death of Brigadier-General Ben Hardin Helm came as a severe blow to the president. "I never saw Mr. Lincoln more moved," said David Davis, "than when he heard of the death of his young brother-in-law . . . only thiry years old, at Chickamauga. I called to see him about four o'clock on the 22nd of September; I found him in the greatest grief. 'Davis' said he, 'I feel as David of old when he was told of the death of Absolom.' I saw how grief-stricken he was, so I closed the door and left him alone."



Ben Hardin Helm

Lincoln, suffering intense grief, could recall his last visit with Helm in mid-April of 1861. He had extended to the loyal Kentuckian a cordial personal invitation to come to Washington. He knew that Helm was a strong Southern-rights Democrat, but on April 27 he handed him a sealed envelope. "Ben," he said, "here is something for you. Think it over by yourself and let me know what you will do." The sealed envelope contained a coveted commission—paymaster in the United States Army with the rank of major. But in 1863 when Lincoln grieved over the death of his relative there was in the War Department this record: "Ben Hardin Helm, nominated for paymaster in the United States Army, April 27, 1861. Declined."

At least twice in 1861 and 1862 Confederate Brigadier-General Helm found an opportunity to send friendly messages to President Lincoln, but the nature of these messages is unknown. While Helm opposed the Union government he did not question the sincerity of his brother-in-law, the President.

This gallant soldier was the son of John La Rue and Lucinda Barbour Hardin. He was born June 2, 1831, at his grandfather's home in Bardstown, Kentucky. His father was twice governor of Kentucky. John L. Helm served as a Whig governor from July, 1850 to September, 1851, succeeding John J. Crittenden who resigned to enter the Fillmore cabinet. In 1867 he served as a Democratic governor for five days, his death occurring on September 8, 1867.

The Governor at the beginning of the Civil War was strongly in favor of the Union, but as the struggle continued and with the beginning of reconstruction he greatly feared that the government would disintegrate or become a central despotism. In his will of over 5,500 words he recorded this prophecy on November 15, 1865:

> "The South was conquered and in my firm conviction the North will sooner or later learn that they are the whipped party."

Ben Hardin Helm's mother was the daughter of Ben Hardin, a member of the United States Senate from Kentucky. John Randolph, the eccentric Virginian, called Ben Hardin "a kitchen knife, rough and homely but keen and trenchant." Randolph had a knack for calling Kentuckians names. He once said that Henry Clay was so brilliant and so corrupt that the only thing he could be compared to was "a heap of rotten mackerel in the moonlight because he shines as he stinks."

Ben Helm received his elementary education at the Elizabethtown Seminary, completing the course of study when he was fifteen. He next entered the Kentucky Military Institute during the winter of 1846. He remained there only three months. On June 2, 1847, his 16th birthday, he entered the West Point Military Academy. He completed the course at the academy and graduated in the class of 1851, ranking ninth in a class of forty-two members.

Upon his graduation he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the "Second Cavalry" and assigned to duty on the frontier at Fort Lincoln, Texas. However, before reporting for duty Helm attended the cavalry school for practice at Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania. While serving with the "Second Dragoons" he contracted inflammatory rheumatism. He was granted a leave of absence and returned to his home in Kentucky. Six months in the army had convinced him that he should follow a military career and he fully intended to return to Fort Lincoln when he got well.

But at home he gave some thought to the future. He took into consideration his health and the slow promotions in the army during periods of peace. So on October 9, 1852, he resigned his commission, largely because his father wanted him to study law. After regaining his health he began the study of law at home and in his father's law office. Entering the School of Law at the University of Louisville, he graduated in the spring of 1853. Next he enrolled for a six months' law course at the Harvard Law School.

This legal career led to the formation of a partnership in Elizabethtown with his father for a period of about two years. Then in 1856 he formed a partnership with Martin H. Cofer which was dissolved in 1858. Martin H. Cofer's wife, a Miss Bush, was a niece of Lincoln's step-mother. In 1858 Ben Helm went to Louisville to engage in a more lucrative practice and there he formed a partnership with Horatio W. Bruce. This lasted until 1861 when both men cast their lots with the Confederacy.

Helm was said to be a fine lawyer who employed the technique of a general coupled with "astuteness of the hairsplitters." During the years 1855-1857 Helm dabbled in politics, becoming a Representative of Hardin County in the General Assembly. From 1856 to 1858 he was commonwealth attorney for his own district. The most remarkable thing about the career of this young man is that he achieved all these things by the time he was twenty-eight years of age.

While in the General Assembly, Helm met Miss Emilie Paret Todd, the daughter of Robert S. Todd of Lexington, and they were married on March 20, 1856. Their marriage, while highly approved by all the families concerned, was a topic of conversation and the subject of a considerable number of letters written by the Stuarts, Edwards and Todds.

In 1857 Helm had some legal business which took him to Springfield, Illinois, and while there he called on his in-laws, the Lincolns. With them he talked politics, compensated emancipation of the slaves and about the people and events in Hardin County, Kentucky. When Helm left Springfield he little realized what four years would bring. Then he did not dream that one day he would lead a Southern army against the constituted government. Neither did he visualize that Lincoln would head that volcanic government. Returning to Kentucky, Helm watched the comet-like rise of Lincoln. For awhile he believed there would be no war in spite of all the threats that were hurled by the South against the Black Republican Party. In the election of 1860 Helm probably voted for John Bell of Tennessee for president, who ran on the Constitutional Union ticket, because his father was a strong Bell-Everett man.

While Helm believed there would be no war, he had the foresight to leave the legal field and to seek a commission in the United States army. Helm's first step in reentering the service was to be appointed the Assistant Inspector General of the Kentucky State Guard in 1860. However, the election of Lincoln materially increased his opportunity for a military career. It is believed that as early as March 1861 Helm went to Washington in quest of an army commission.

The commission Lincoln offered Helm in April caused him to be completely stunned. Apparently he did not think such an attractive offer would be forthcoming from the Lincoln government. He even confessed to Lincoln that he had not voted for him in the 1860 election, but that he had no ill will against him. He thought his offer was both kind and generous.

The paymaster position with the rank of major was attractive. It carried a salary of $187 a month, broken up as follows: $80 salary, $36 rations, $24 forage for three horses, and $47 for two servants. Then, too, it was highly probable that Helm would secure promotions as time went on, probably becoming a colonel within a year. Helm would also enjoy the distinction of being one of the youngest officers with the rank of major in the entire army. Also because of his work in the legal field he would be particularly suited for a position as paymaster.

In the meantime, Lincoln had made Helm another inducement. He would send him to the frontier if he was unwilling to use his sword directly or indirectly for the coercion of the Southern states if a major war should ensue. Mrs. Lincoln also made a plea. She wanted Emilie to live with them in the White House. Mary Lincoln said she would be the toast of Washington society.

However, fate seemed to enter into Ben Helm's decision. He contacted his Southern friends in Washington and they did not agree with Lincoln's policies. But a most decisive turn of events came when he called on Colonel Robert E. Lee, the day he resigned his commission in the United States army. Lee told Helm that he would never fight against his own people. Lee did not doubt Lincoln's sincerity, and after he learned that Helm was the President's brother-in-law he told him Lincoln could not control the political chaos that was on the horizon.

Helm left the city of Washington still undecided. Upon his return to Kentucky he went to Frankfort. In the state capital Helm saw two of his friends, Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner, the Inspector General of the Kentucky State Guard, and Thomas B. Monroe, Jr., the Attorney-General. These men were going with the Confederacy.

It was the firing on Fort Sumter that caused wavering men to make a decision, and when Governor Beriah Magoffin issued his famous dispatch of April 15, 1861, in answer to Simon Cameron, the Secretary of War, who had asked for Kentucky troops to put down the rebellion, the die was cast. Governor Magoffin replied: "I say, emphatically, Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern states."

It was during the critical state of affairs in April 1861 that Helm made his next stop. He went to Montgomery, Alabama, and called on President Jefferson Davis, offering his military services. Davis' reply was: "Bring Kentucky into the Confederacy." The South at this time had more troops than they could adequately arm and equip. Returning to Kentucky, Helm became active in the State Militia and tried to establish in Kentucky "strict neutrality," a condition that was found later to be impracticable. This in a sense was a violation of Davis' request, because both the North and the South could not tolerate strict neutrality on the part of Kentucky.

With the war situation becoming more critical, Helm turned his attention to recruiting. He organized ten companies which constituted the First Regiment of Kentucky Cavalry. It was said of Helm that "one blast upon his bugle horn was worth a thousand men." The regiment was mustered in at Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Helm was commissioned a colonel by the Confederate government in September 1861. During the training period of the First Kentucky Cavalry, Helm's regiment engaged in scout and outpost duty, becoming a kind of corps of observation. When the Confederate army abandoned Bowling Green, Helm's regiment covered the withdrawal. Arriving in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on February 23, 1862, Helm was placed under the orders of General John C.

Breckinridge, where his regiment was temporarily brigaded with the Kentucky Infantry. Upon reeciving an order to observe the movements of the Union forces on the Tennessee River, Helm took up his station at Burnsville, Mississippi, and guarded the approaches to the town of Corinth.

Knowing of Colonel Helm's scouting activities, General Albert Sidney Johnston sent Helm on an observation tour between the Federal position on the Tennessee River and Nashville. Helm took with him a select body of men, leaving the latter part of March to observe the activities of General Don Carolos Buell's Army. Helm reported to General Johnston that Buell was planning to march to the Tennessee River and join General Ulysses S. Grant. Helm believed that Buell could join Grant by April 6, 1862.

On the basis of these observations Johnston planned the battle of Shiloh. Johnston wanted to fight the battle on April 4, before Buell's arrival, but he was prevented from doing so because of the difficulty of transporting his artillery over the wet and soft country roads. The failure to attack Grant before he was reinforced by Buell resulted in a defeat for the Confederate forces and the death of the able Kentuckian, General Johnston.

During the battle of Shiloh Helm was required to hold his position on the Tennessee, to guard the approaches to Johnston's left and rear, and with such an assignment he found little opportunity for brilliant action. In spite of the fact that General Johnston lost his life, Helm was promoted for his work in the intelligence service. He was commissioned a brigadier-general on April 17, 1862, with the appointment predated March 14th.

Helm was ordered to report to General John C. Breckinridge and was made commander of the Third Brigade of Infantry of the Reserve Corps, consisting of Arkansas, Mississippi and Missouri regiments. Helm was disappointed with his command because he had under him no Kentucky troops. This situation, however, did not exist for any lengthy period of time, because on July 8, at Vicksburg, another change was made in the Reserve Corps, when the regiments under Brigadier-General J. M. Hawes were designated as the Second Brigade and placed under the command of General Helm. The troops of this brigade consisted of men from Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Helm appointed his staff officers, and among the half-dozen men he selected he picked Major Thomas H. Hayes, his brother-in-law and a resident of Hardin County, Kentucky, and Lieutenant Alexander H. Todd, of Lexington, Kentucky, another brother-in-law, to act in the capacity of assistant inspector general and aide-de-camp, respectively. The Second Brigade was destined to see action within the month at the Battle of Baton Rouge. It was the plan of General Breckinridge to capture Baton Rouge, with the assistance of the immense ironclad ram, the Arkansas, which was to cooperate with his land force. The city was occupied by a Union army under the command of General Thomas Williams, who was successful, although he lost his life, in driving Breckinridge back.

Shortly before the attack on August 5, Breckinridge's men were waiting for daylight in order to make a charge when an unfortunate accident occurred. Some mounted rangers were placed behind the artillery and infantry, but in the darkness they eased forward because they were eager to get into the fray, and in riding to the front they encountered Union sentries. This caused an exchange of shots to be fired. The Confederate rangers then galloped back to their own lines amidst a hail of fire, and this action provoked additional firing between the Confederate troops and their mounted horsemen.

The results were tragic, and among other casualties Brigadier-General Helm was dangerously injured by a fall from his horse, being knocked over and contused by running cavalry. Lieutenant Todd, Mrs. Lincoln's half-brother, was killed from one of the aimless shots that was fired during the confusion. Lieutenant Todd, age 23, was the youngest of the Todd brothers. He is described as having been handsome, and with a winning personality. He was idolized by his family and evidently had an interesting career before him. He received a special invitation from Abraham Lincoln to witness the inauguration ceremonies on March 4, 1861, which he accepted.

The news of Alexander Todd's death caused Mrs. Lincoln to fall to her knees and weep, exclaiming, "Oh, little Aleck, why had you too to die!" Alexander Todd was the second brother to lose his life, as Samuel Todd was killed while serving in a Louisiana regiment at Shiloh. David Todd, a third brother, was also destined to die from the effects of a wound received at Vicksburg.

General Helm's injury was of such a nature as to render him disabled for weeks, and General Thomas H. Hunt, who had immediately assumed command of his brigade in the action before Baton Rouge, was given temporary command of the troops while his commander recovered. By September, General Helm was again able to report for duty and he was assigned the command of the Post of Chattanooga. Later he was transferred to the command of the Eastern District, Department of the Gulf, with headquarters at Pollard, Alabama. This transfer was made after General Braxton Bragg's army had passed Chattanooga on his retreat from Kentucky. The reason for assigning General Helm to the Department of the Gulf was due to the Confederate's apprehensions of an advance on the part of the Federals operating from Pensacola.

On January 31, 1863, by direction of President Davis, Helm was ordered to report to General William Joseph Hardee for the command of the brigade of the late Brigadier General Roger W. Hanson, who had been killed at the battle of Stone's River. Hardee then ordered Helm to report to Breckinridge for the command of the First Kentucky Brigade, which consisted of the Second, Fourth, Sixth, and Ninth Kentucky Regiments, Forty-first Alabama Regiment and Captain Robert L. Cobbs (Kentucky) Battery.

General Helm took up his assignment on February 16, 1863, and he immediately selected his staff officers. Of the seven men who were chosen, two were from his home community of Hardin County and one of his aides-de-

camp was Lieutenant William Wallace Herr, who married in January, 1866, Katherine Bodley ("Kitty") Todd, the sister of Mrs. Helm and a half-sister of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln.

For several months the First Kentucky Brigade, which was a part of the Division commanded by General Breckinridge, was more or less idle. While they were stationed in Middle Tennessee at Wartrace, Manchester, Beech Grove and Hoover's Gap, General Helm drilled his men and became active in his duties as commander. When Breckinridge was absent it devolved upon him to command the division, which was good training fror a brigadier. Due to the fact that time and again their divisional or brigade commander was absent, or transferred to other commands, or killed in battle, the expatriated Kentuckians often thought of their brigade as an orphan—..hence the use of the name "Orphan Brigade" later became current.

The division of Breckinridge was next ordered into Mississippi to reinforce General Joseph E. Johnston, who in turn was to relieve General John C. Pemberton, then under siege at Vicksburg. Helm's brigade spent the entire month of June, 1863, in the vicinity of Jackson, Mississippi, fortifying their position, picketing and following the general routine of camp life. The overall strategy of the Confederates failed and this campaign proved to be the most disagreeable in Helm's career.

On August 25, 1863, the Division of Breckinridge was ordered to Tyner's Station, located near Chattanooga, to reinforce General Bragg. On September 2nd, Helm's Brigade went into camp and by the eighth day of that month the movements which were the preliminary steps leading to the great battle of Chickamauga were initiated. They marched and countermarched and finally after complicated preliminary military maneuvers the division bivouacked on September 18th, near Chickamauga Creek.

Approaching Chickamauga Creek from Pigeon Mountain, Breckinridge's division took their place on the east side of that stream. Their position was near Glass's Mill and they constituted the extreme left of the infantry of the Army. Breckinridge ordered the second Kentucky across the ford near Glass's Mill in order to determine the strength of the Federal forces, and the Sixth Kentucky was placed in close supporting distance. Other forces were dispatched along the creek, and on the morning of the 19th the remainder of Helm's brigade, along with other regiments, was sent across Glass's Ford. The advance position of Helm's Brigade drew fire from the Federals.

While this minor engagement was taking place, General Breckinride received orders from Lieutenant General D. H. Hill to withdraw his position and to proceed to a point about three miles south of Lee and Gordon's Mill. This place was on the road leading from Chattanooga to Lafayette, and was an ideal situation for guarding the approach to that road from Glass's Mill and the ford above. A few casualties resulted from the directed change in the position,

but the losses were slight. However, this point was not held for any length of time, as Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk was moving the division of his wing as so many men upon a chessboard.

The last important movement of Breckinridge's division occurred during the night of September 19th and the morning of the 20th, when he was ordered to lengthen the battle line upon the right of Major Patrick R. Cleburne, which placed the Kentuckians on the extreme right of the infantry line of battle, General Helm's brigade constituting the extreme left of Breckinridge's line, General Stovall's was in the center, and General Adam's brigade was on the right.

With orders to advance on the Federals, Cleburne's and Breckinridge's divisions, after some delays, moved forward about 9:30 a. m., and this phase of the battle of Chickamauga opened with great fury, and Helm's brigade which had lunged forward with terrifice force turned out to be in the center of the fiercest fighting.

About 10 a. m. while Breckinridge's division was moving forward against the Federals it was noticed that for some reason a part of the left brigade under Helm had not advanced simultaneously with the rest of the division. Later it was determined that they were facing breastworks situated in angular positions, which subjected Helm's men not only to fire in front but to a fierce infilading fire from the left. This portion of the line proved to be one of the most hotly contested positions of the entire battlefield. Here gallant Kentuckians by the hundreds "gave their lives in reckless fashion" as they pushed ahead under the withering crossfire. General Helm, their beloved leader, riding boldly toward the works of the enemy, was hit in the right side by a musket ball and fell mortally stricken from his horse.

Immediately after Helm had received his fatal wound Colonel Joseph H. Lewis of the Sixth Kentucky was ordered to command the brigade--the "Orphan Brigade," but the fire of the Federals drove the Confederates back two hundred yards to the rear and this left a gap in Breckinridge's lines, which caused much tactical trouble and a great loss of life during the remainder of the battle. The rest of the encounter is of course a matter of historical record, and even the dying General Helm at the close of the day heard that the battle of Chickamauga was a victory for the Confederates.

When General Helm fell on the morning of September 20, 1863, he was carried from the field by two aides, Lieutenant William Wallace Herr and Lieutenant John B. Pirtle. Upon an examination of the wound in his right side it was soon determined by the military surgeons of the field hospital that there was no hope for his recovery. He lingered for several hours and during the night of that fatal day he expired. The corpse of the thirty-two year old brigadier-general was conveyed to the home of Colonel W. H. Dabney in Atlanta, where the remains lay until the 23rd. A funeral service for the brave

soldier was held in the Episcopal Church, followed by interment in the Atlanta Cemetery with military honors. Emilie arrived just in time to be present at the sad rites.

On the same day that President Lincoln wired Mrs. Lincoln (September 24, 1963) informing her of her brother-in-law's death, he sent a telegram to General William S. Rosecrans at Chattanooga, Tennessee, stating that he had read the accounts of the battle in the Richmond papers and he inquired concerning the death of General Helm. Lincoln explained that General Helm was listed as killed, but that a General John B. H. Helm was listed as among those wounded. Likely Lincoln held a faint hope that General Helm's wounds were not fatal, but such was not the case.

In that day news traveled slowly in some sections of the war-torn country and it was not until the early days of October that Governor Helm heard the account of the death of his son. On October 11, 1863, at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, he wrote Mrs. Robert S. Todd at Lexington, Kentucky. In his letter he announced his son's death and expressed the opinion that Emilie wanted to come home. Governor Helm asked Mrs. Todd if she could get passes from Lincoln for Emilie and her two children. After General Helm's funeral, General Bragg had tried to get passes for the young widow from General Grant, but that Union officer was not sympathetic to the proposal. Mrs. Todd followed Governor Helm's suggestion and through Dr. Lyman Beecher Todd, the Lexington postmaster and cousin of Mrs. Lincoln, passes were secured. Mrs. Todd then went to Georgia to accompany her daughter and her two children home.

In writing the pass for Mrs. Helm, Lincoln inadvertently made a slip. It was his custom never to write or utter the word "Confederate" when he referred to the states that had seceded from the Union. Yet, in Mrs. Helm's pass he referred to (". . . the late General B. H. Helm, who fell in the Confederate service)." Lincoln assumed, although one wonders why, that Mrs. Helm would take the oath of allegiance. Accordingly he drafted an amnesty oath for her to subscribe:

"I, Emily T. Helm, do solemnly swear in presence of Almighty God that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the union of the States thereunder; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified, or held void by Congress, or by decisions of the Supreme Court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President, made during the existing rebellion, having reference to slaves so long and so far as not modified or declared void by the Supreme Court. So help me God."

Thinking that Mrs. Helm would take the oath of December 8, 1863, Lincoln carefully prepared the following statement of amnesty:

"Mrs. Emily T. Helm, not being excepted from the benefits of the proclamation by the President of the United States issued on the eighth day of December, 1863, and having on this day taken and subscribed the oath according to said proclamation, she is fully relieved of all penalties and forfeitures, and remitted to all her rights—all according to said proclamation, and not otherwise; and, in regard to said restored rights of person and property, she is to be protected and afforded facilities as a loyal person."

In a postscript of the amnesty statement Lincoln indicated some concern about the property of the young widow:

"Mrs. Helm claims to own some cotton at Jackson, Mississippi, and also some in Georgia; and I shall be glad, upon either place being brought within our lines, for her to be afforded the proper facilities to show her ownership and take her property."

Traveling northward by steamer under a flag of truce, Mrs. Helm, her two children and her mother arrived at Fortress Monroe. There Mrs. Helm was told that she could not proceed any further until she took the oath of allegiance. This she refused to do, under the penalty of being sent back to the South. The Federal officers tried to use kindness and they explained that the requirement of the oath was not their order but that of the President. In despair the Federal officers wired the President for instruction. Lincoln replied, "Send her to me."

Mrs. Todd proceeded on her way to Lexington, taking the younger daughter, Elodie, While Mrs. Helm and Katherine went on to Washington, D. C. Ben Hardin, the youngest child, had not been born at the time Emilie visited the White House. Once in the capital the meeting between Emilie and Mary Lincoln was quite touching. One was grieving over the loss of a husband and the other was not yet reconciled to the death of Willie.

Mrs. Helm was shown every courtesy during the week she stayed in the White House. She occupied the suite that had been so beautifully decorated for the Prince of Wales when he visited the country in 1860. Mrs. Lincoln tried to keep the conversation in channels other than the war while she was her guest. However, Katherine Helm and Tad Lincoln argued over who was president—Lincoln or Davis.

On December 14, 1863, Senator Orville H. Browning called on Lincoln, who told Browning that his sister-in-law was in the house, but that he did not wish it known. Lincoln also told Browning about Mrs. Helm's cotton. He thought she ought to have it but he was afraid that he would be censured if he should help her to get it. Lincoln failed to keep Mrs. Helm's visit a secret, because this ardent Southerner could not hold her tongue when the Confederacy was assailed. One day Senator Ira Harris and General Daniel E. Sickles called at the White House. General Sickles told Mrs. Helm that she might give Senator Harris some news of his old friend, John C. Breckinridge. This she refused to do. She answered all of his questions in an evasive manner. This angered Harris

who remarked that the Union soldiers had whipped the rebels at Chattanooga, and that he had heard "that the scoundrels ran like scared rabbits." This was too much for Emilie Helm who told Senator Harris that "they had followed the example set for them by the Federals at Manassas." Sickles struggled upstairs, because he had lost a leg at Gettysburg, to Lincoln's office to tell the President that he would have to get that rebel out of this house. This demand angered Lincoln who told the excited general that he (Lincoln) was usually in the habit of choosing his own guests and, besides, he explained that Mrs. Helm was there because of his orders.

After a week's visit in the White House, Mrs. Helm decided to continue her journey to Lexington. When she departed Lincoln wrote her a pass "to protect her against the mere fact of being General Helm's widow." Lincoln also told her that in her zeal for the Southern cause she should do nothing which would embarrass him or the administration. He told her that he had never known her to do a mean thing.

Upon her return to Lexington and Elizabethtown, Emilie did not find the peaceful and serene communities that she had known before the war. In Lexington she found conditions exceedingly trying because of the tyrannical rule of General Stephen G. Burbridge. This Union officer was enforcing martial law upon the people of the Blue Grass country. Mrs. Helm was indignant at the conditions she saw in Lexington, and her mother and sister tried to thwart Burbridge in every way they could.

In spite of Mrs. Helm's commendable personal conduct the activities of her sister Katherine (Kitty) Todd and her mother placed the young widow in an extremely unfavorable position. The mother and daughter were unusually active in the fall of 1864 when they attempted to prevent the infliction of the death penalty upon Captain McGee and Walter Ferguson, two Confederate soldiers who had ridden with the troops of General John Hunt Morgan. The Todds went so far as to petition Lincoln to commute the sentence, but their efforts were in vain. However, it is believed that Lincoln would have yielded to their pleas, but the petition of mercy was intercepted and Lincoln did not receive their request for commutation.

Some charges were trumped up against Mrs. Helm, because Burbridge and his underlings resented this Southern woman who enjoyed immunity as a result of Lincoln's protection paper. Only once did she have occasion to use the order and that was when she asked a Federal officer to keep his troops, who had camped near her home, from trespassing and to cease taking her family's food as it was being cooked in their kitchen.

Emilie's presence in Lexington did not ever go unnoticed by the Union authorities, and within less than a year after her return home a malicious rumor of treasonable acts against the government was charged against her. Upon hearing the charges the President wrote General Burbridge the following letter:

"Last December Mrs. Emilie T. Helm stopped here on her way from Georgia to Kentucky, and I gave her a paper, as I remember, to protect her against the mere fact of her being General Helm's widow. I hear a rumor today that you recently sought to arrest her, but was prevented by her presenting the paper from me. I do not intend to protect her against the consequences of disloyal words or acts, spoken or done by her since her return to Kentucky, and if the paper given her by me can be construed to give her protection for such words or acts; it is hereby revoked **pro tanto.** Deal with her for current conduct just as you would with any other."

In the light of this letter it would appear that Mrs. Helm had actually violated a confidence. The publication of this letter in the **Century** magazine, December, 1895, Vol. LI, No. 2, as a part of the article "Appeals to Lincoln's Clemency" by Leslie J. Perry, was a surprise to Mrs. Helm who up to that time did not know of its existence. In the **Century** magazine, June 1896, Vol LII, No. 2, page 318, Mrs. Helm in the "Open Letters" under the title "President Lincoln and the Widow of General Helm" defended her position and gave a convincing explanation why she thought Lincoln wrote the letter.

Further proof that Mrs. Helm did not violate Lincoln's confidence is indicated by the fact that he continued to help her try to get possession of her six hundred bales of cotton. Lincoln secured an order from General Grant dated March 25, 1865, for the protection of the cotton and Mrs. Helm made an inopportune business trip to the South at the time of the fall of Richmond, to further establish her possession of the valuable commodity. Unfortunately the cotton was burned in an accidental fire, and Mrs. Helm was advised to leave immediately on the next flag of truce boat.

With the war at an end, Emilie Todd Helm's long life was spent in devotion to her gallant husband's memory and her cruel fate was softened somewhat by her three children. Residing for awhile in Lexington, she then moved to the ancestral acres of the Kentucky Helms in Elizabethtown, Hardin County.

As a widow in her early twenties, she had as her main purpose in life the education of her children, and this expense necessitated the acceptance of some suitable position. As her residence in Kentucky had been almost intolerable, Emilie bought a home in Madison, Indiana, north of the Ohio River, where she could remain free of the turmoil of the reconstruction program. There she became the organist in Christ Church, where as an accomplished musician she earned a livelihood.

After residing in Madison for ten or twelve years Mrs. Helm moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and for about two years she taught a class in music. Next she decided to return to Elizabethtown where she was appointed postmistress by President Chester A. Arthur. She held this office for twelve years, three successive presidential terms, preceding 1895. During her Elizabethtown residence she was honored (1888) with the title "Mother of the Orphan Brigade."

She again returned to Louisville to reside. Ben Hardin, her third child and only son, had promised his mother to buy a Blue Grass farm as soon as he could make the money, and in 1912 he purchased the colonial home of Colonel Abraham Bowman, situated near Lexington on the Bowman's Mill Road. There, in an atmosphere of the past, surrounded by the trappings of her soldier-husband, and deeply imbued with the Lincoln tradition, she died February 20, 1930, at the age of ninety-three years.

The most significant event in her life, after the war had ended, was the occasion of the reunion of the First Kentucky (Orphan) Brigade of Infantry at Elizabethtown on September 19, 1884. It was at this solemn and impressive gathering of Confederate veterans that the remains of General Ben Hardin Helm was re-interred in the pioneer burial ground of his fathers, in the shadow of the great granite shaft erected by the State of Kentucky in honor of the General's father, Governor John L. Helm.

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1942—"Lincoln on Agriculture," Address by Abraham Lincoln before Wisconsin State Agriculture Society, 1859. (Out of print).

1944—"Lincoln Comes to Wisconsin," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by Edward P. Alexander, Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. (Out of print).

1945—"A Pilgrimage to the Lincoln Country," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by Arthur C. Hansen, M. D., Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. (Out of print).

1946—"Abraham Lincoln in Wisconsin," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by George P. Hambrecht, Madison, Wisconsin. (Out of print).

1947—"Lincoln in the Legislature," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by Harry E. Pratt, Springfield, Illinois.

1948—"The Heart of Abraham Lincoln," by Albert H. Griffith, Fisk, Winnebago County, Wisconsin.

1949—"Lincoln Visits Beloit and Janesville, Wisconsin" (Contemporary Accounts of Anti-Slavery Speeches of October 1, 1859), by Louis W. Bridgman.

1950—"The Lincoln Statue at the University of Wisconsin," Address at Ceremonies of Acceptance and of Dedication (1909) of Only Replica of the Adolph A. Weiman Statue at Hodgenville, Kentucky.

1951—"For Us the Living," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by Benjamin P. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois.

1952—"Lincoln's Problems in Wisconsin," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by William B. Hesseltine, The University of Wisconsin, Madison.

1953—"The Hooker Letter," Address before Milwaukee Civil War Round Table, by Arthur C. Hansen, M. D., Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

1954—"President Lincoln's Blockade and the Defense of Mobile," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by W. Norman FitzGerald, Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

1955—"The Abraham Lincoln Industry," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by Ralph G. Newman, Chicago, Illinois.

1956—"Lincoln's Critics in Wisconsin," Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, by Frank L. Klement, Marquette University.

1957—"The Lincoln Nobody Knows," by Richard N. Current, Greensboro, North Carolina, Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin.

1959—"Confederate General Ben Hardin Helm—Kentucky Brother-in-Law of Abraham Lincoln," by R. Gerald McMurtry, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Address at Annual Meeting of Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin.

These publications, except those noted as out of print, are still available at 50 cents each, upon application to the Secretary, Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, 1910 Kendall Avenue, Madison 5, Wisconsin.

"Edgewood"

THE BEN HARDIN HOUSE

Bardstown, Kentucky

Erected 1815-1819

Owned by Mr. and Mrs. John W. Muir

This fine colonial brick mansion at the head of Fifth Street was erected by Ben Hardin on a sizeable tract of rich land near the city. The house consists of two distinct parts, erected at different periods. The older, two-story right wing contains the kitchen and dining room; it was erected around 1815. The three-story main part of the house, enclosing the high-ceilinged bedrooms and immense hall, was built between 1819 and 1822. Upstairs are four large bedrooms, one being twenty-five feet square. A feature of Edgewood is the fanlighted doorway between the double parlors, an arrangement rare even in Kentucky. Fine mantels grace the parlors and the lovely stairway with cherry handrail mounts to the third floor. Still visible are the initials "B. H." cut in the marble step at the front porch, which was originally one-story. Ben Hardin, born in Pennsylvania in 1784, was one of Kentucky's greatest criminal lawyers, statesman and many times a member of the Upper and Lower Houses of the Kentucky Legislature, ten years a Member of Congress, Secretary of State of Kentucky, and a leader in the State Constitutional Convention of 1849. His wife, Betsy Barbour, was the daughter of a distinguished family of Virginians. In 1830, Hardin's eldest daughter, Lucinda B. Hardin, married John L. Helm, afterwards Speaker of the House of Representatives, twice Governor of Kentucky and President of the L. & N. Railroad. His son, Gen. Ben Hardin Helm, C.S.A., was born at Edgewood on June 2, 1831. He married Emilie Todd, sister of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. During the Confederate occupation of Bardstown by Braxton Bragg's army, the

(Over)

old house served as headquarters for General Leonidas Polk. Many distinguished men have been entertained at Edgewood, including General William Preston, Cassius M. Clay, Robert Wickliffe, Solomon P. Sharp, Jesse Bledsoe, Felix Grundy, John Rowan, Senator Augustus H. Garland, Bishop H. H. Kavanaugh and others of national importance. The large acreage which once comprised the Ben Hardin estate contained the site of the famous duel in 1801 between Judge John Rowan, of My Old Kentucky Home, and Dr. James Chambers; and the large grove where barbecues were held in the 1840's with Henry Clay, Judge John Rowan and John J. Crittenden in attendance.

After the "mansion house" was sold in December, 1853, to settle the estate of Ben Hardin, it remained much the same during the ownership of Judge T. P. Linthicum, Ludwell McKay and heirs; Orville Arnold and C. P. Rapier, until its purchase in 1935 by Harry A. Tuer. Four years later the old residence passed to H. R. Kendall, who removed the one-story porch and added the tall columns. Since July, 1957, Edgewood has been owned and occupied by Bardstown banker John W. Muir and his family. Edgewood gives an excellent picture of a cultured Kentucky home during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

J. Winston Coleman, Jr., Litt.D.
Author of
Slavery Times in Kentucky
Famous Kentucky Duels, etc.

•

Ben Hardin's son, B. Rowan Hardin, recruited Company "C," Fourth Regiment Kentucky Foot Volunteers, and accompanied his regiment to Mexico in 1847, but saw no service of note. In 1851 President Fillmore appointed him Secretary of Legation to Guatemala. During that year in a secluded spot in the mountains of the Isthmus of Darien, he was murdered by an unknown assassin.

Jasper W. Muir, grandfather of the present owner of "Edgewood," was with Captain Hardin's company in Mexico and was associated with the celebrated father as a junior law partner.

The name "Preston," and the date, "July 1, 1831," carved on the inside of a cupboard door of a second floor room at Edgewood recalls the fact that General William Preston lived with the Hardin family while a student at St. Joseph's College. After further education at Yale and Harvard, he served in Congress from the Louisville district; he was U. S. Ambassador to Spain 1858-61; Ambassador from the Confederacy to Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, in 1864; a lieutenant colonel during the war with Mexico and a major general in the Confederate army. Confederate General Preston's father-in-law, Robert Wickliffe, of Lexington, was the largest slave owner in Kentucky, owning more than two hundred slaves.

Lincoln Lore

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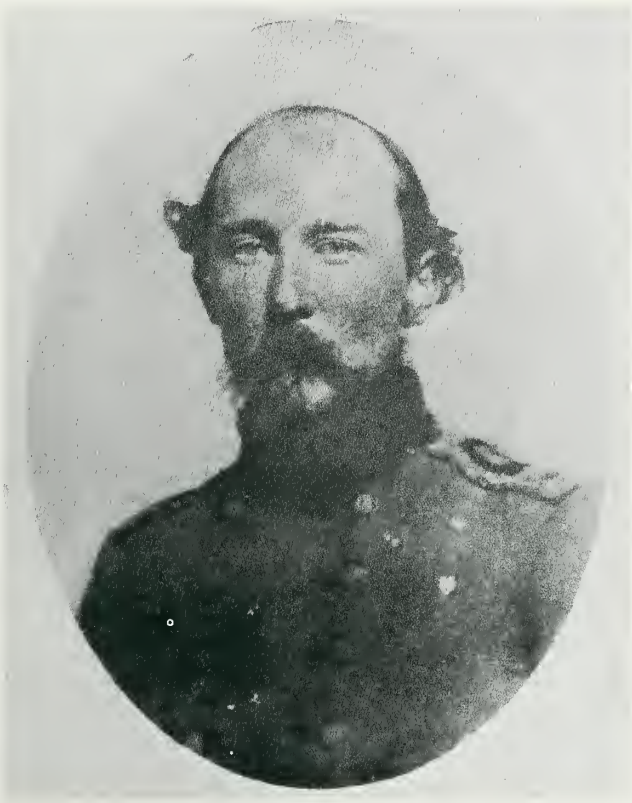
BRIG.-GEN. BEN HARDIN HELM
MRS. LINCOLN'S "REBEL" BROTHER-IN-LAW

Editor's Note: In 1943 the Civil War Round Table of Chicago published 225 copies of R. Gerald McMurtry's brochure, *Ben Hardin Helm "Rebel' Brother-in-Law of Abraham Lincoln — with a Biographical Sketch of His Wife and an Account of the Todd Family of Kentucky.* This was the Round Table's first publication and 25 copies were reserved by the author and the remainder were distributed among its members and friends. Now, twenty-nine years later, it is being reprinted (without the references and annotations) because very little information on Ben Hardin Helm has appeared in past issues of the *Lincoln Lore* bulletin.

R. G. M.

No high official of the Confederate government, either soldier or civilian, had a more intimate contact with President Abraham Lincoln than the rebel brigadier-general, Ben Hardin Helm. This close association resulted from the fact that the two men had married half-sisters and this kinship formed a lasting friendship which continued until the first years of the Civil War and until the death of General Helm.

Lincoln and Helm had much in common other than marriage in the Todd family. The young soldier resided in Hardin County, Kentucky, only fourteen miles from the place where Lincoln first saw the light of day, although he was born June 2, 1831, in the home of his grandfather, Ben Hardin, at Bardstown. Then, too, during the years of peace before the Civil War, Ben Hardin Helm had taken up law as his profession, which of course provided him with a congenial basis for a lasting friendship with Abe Lincoln, who was making a name for himself before the Illinois bar and in local politics.



Photograph from the Meserve Collection

A biographical sketch of Brigadier General Ben Hardin Helm is to be found in Ed Porter Thompson's, *History of the Orphan Brigade*, Lewis N. Thompson, Louisville, Kentucky, 1898, pages 380-387.

Lincoln's brother - in - law was the oldest child of twelve children born to John Larue Helm and Lucinda Barbour Hardin. His father was twice governor of Kentucky and served in several other offices of trust and profit. The son was nurtured by the father in the Whig tradition, the same political party Lincoln championed so long in Illinois. John L. Helm was elected Lieutenant-governor in 1848 on the Whig ticket with John J. Crittenden, and he served out that notable Kentuckian's term when he resigned in 1850 to enter the Fillmore cabinet. Again in 1867, during the reconstruction period, he was elected governor by a majority of 43,019 votes over his combined radical and conservative opponents. Governor Helm took the oath of office on September 3, while lying ill at his home in Elizabethtown, and he expired five days later before assuming his official duties.

His mother was a daughter of Ben Hardin, a member of the United States Senate from Kentucky, who was dubbed by John Randolph as a "kitchen-knife whetted on a brick." The eccentric Virginian characterized Hardin as being "rough and homely but keen and trenchant." From such illustrious forebears, who rank high on the list of Kentucky's imperishable names, Ben Hardin Helm was reared with a love for his country, his state and Southern institutions. Quite naturally he found his place in the aristocratic society of the South and, not unlike his friends and neighbors, he cherished the Union, but the key-stone of that governmental structure, in the light of his upbringing, was States Rights.

Helm received his literary education in the Elizabethtown Seminary, where he displayed a prodigious mind by completing the prescribed course of study when he was only fifteen. Even at this tender age, he decided upon a military career, but because of his youth he was unable to enter the West Point Military Academy immediately. Undaunted, he enrolled as a cadet in the Kentucky Military Institute in the winter of 1846. Cadet Helm remained at K.M.I. for only three months and then entered the United States Military Academy on July 1, 1847, shortly after his sixteenth birthday. After completing the regular four-year course, he was graduated ninth in a class of forty-two members in 1851. He was brevetted second-lieutenant in the Second Cavalry, July 1, 1851. However, before reporting for duty on the frontier at Fort Lincoln, Texas, he attended the Cavalry School for Practice at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

While serving with his company, the "Second Dragoons," he unfortunately contracted inflammatory rheumatism, which rendered him totally unfit for a soldier's life. The seriousness of the attack, indeed, even pre-

Ben Hardin Helm graduated from the United States Military Academy (ninth in a class of forty-two members) in 1851.

cluded his chances for recovery, so he obtained a leave of absence and returned to his home in Kentucky. The six months he had spent in Texas with the Second Cavalry convinced him that he was best fitted for the military profession and he longed for the day when he could rejoin his comrades at Fort Lincoln.

But after taking up his residence in Kentucky, he gave considerable thought to the future and, not unmindful of his health and the fact that there was small chance for attaining distinction in the army when the nation was at peace, he yielded to his father's wishes and resigned his commission on October 9, 1852. This resignation from the army necessitated his following an entirely new career after he had recovered his strength.

The Kentucky climate, along with the proper medical attention, enabled Helm to regain his health, which immediately added fuel to the fire of his ambition. He hoped to win renown in some worthwhile profession. Knowing that law is a trustworthy vehicle for politics, which has rocked in its cradle many a "darling of destiny," he resolved to enter that profession and immediately began to study under the direction of his distinguished father. The law-office course only convinced him of the necessity of adequate training and he enrolled in the School of Law of the University of Louisville, and graduated from that institution in the spring of 1853. Realizing the need for more advanced instruction, he immediately entered the Harvard Law School at Cambridge, Massachusetts, for a six-months course, before returning to Elizabethtown to practice his profession with his father.

The father and son partnership was of only a short duration and in 1856 he organized a law firm with Martin H. Cofer as his partner, which remained in existence until 1858 when he sought a more lucrative field for practice.

Going to the Kentucky metropolis, he was admitted to the Louisville bar and there he formed a partnership with Horatio W. Bruce, his brother-in-law. This partnership continued until 1861 when both men cast their lot with the Confederacy. As a member of the Louisville bar, he displayed great talent, and this, along with his high sense of honor, his lofty purpose, and his unswerving integrity, distinguished him as one of the ablest lawyers practicing before the Kentucky courts.

With a military-legal education, he always displayed a fine grasp of the strong points of the law and, in conducting a case before the court, he used the technique of a general coupled with "the astuteness of the hair-splitter." He attacked the vulnerable positions of his legal opponents, which as a cadet in the military academy he had been taught to determine in advance. When he was placed on the defensive, he so guarded his position as to exhaust and bewilder his opponents before they could center their attack. Complicated suits in chancery were of little concern to Ben Hardin Helm, who early in his legal career learned to comprehend quickly their exacting terms in the development of his cases for his clients.

Shortly after graduating from law school, Helm entered politics and in 1855 he was chosen to represent Hardin County in the Kentucky General Assembly. As a state representative, he assumed a place of distinction in the legislative chamber, because of his legal knowledge and his astute grasp of governmental problems seldom displayed by one of his age. Serving his county in this capacity for only one term, he next announced his candidacy for Commonwealth Attorney for his own judicial district (Third District of Kentucky) and won that office in 1856. He served in this position until 1858. The most remarkable thing about the career of this brilliant lawyer was that he had achieved all of these distinctions by the time that he had reached the age of twenty-eight.

While a member of the General Assembly, this eligible young politician met Miss Emilie Todd, a daughter of Robert S. Todd of Lexington, Kentucky. Their friendship ripened into an affair of matrimony and on March 20, 1856, the couple was married in Frankfort, Kentucky, which was followed by a grand reception at Buena Vista, the country home of the Todds. Mrs. Helm, like her half sister, Mrs. Lincoln, was accomplished in the cultural arts which the "Athens of the West" afforded in her day. Being an aristocratic and estimable lady, this marriage was looked upon with favor by both the Todd and Helm families and the young matron endeared herself to all of her husband's Elizabethtown friends.

Ben Hardin Helm married Miss Emilie Todd, a daughter of Robert S. Todd of Lexington, Kentucky on March 20, 1856. This photograph was taken in 1857.

In 1857, while still practicing law in his home town, Helm had an opportunity to go to Springfield, Illinois, to argue a case before the courts of that capital city. This afforded him an opportunity to visit his kinsmen and to extend to Mary Todd Lincoln the sincerest and best wishes of his wife, who was familiarly known to all her relatives as "Little Sister." Mrs. Lincoln had never before had an opportunity to meet the distinguished husband of Emilie and she greeted him cordially as a brother-in-law and fellow Kentuckian. Mary Lincoln saw for herself that he was truly handsome, being six feet tall and having a well-proportioned figure which gave evidence of military training. She liked his penetrating blue eyes, his brown hair which blended with his ruddy complexion, and his genial and attractive countenance which lighted up at the slightest provocation. In receiving Helm in his home as a guest, Lincoln did not forget that this young man was the grandson of the "kitchen-knife whetted on a brick." The Lincolns knew how to be hospitable and they entertained the Kentucky attorney for a week.

Helm was a States Rights Democrat and Lincoln was a Republican and, when their conversation drifted around to politics, they could not agree. With Mary they discussed the slavery question from the date of its inception down to the year of the Dred Scott decision, and Helm believed the border states might be willing to adopt a plan of gradual compensated emancipation, but, as a matter of principle, this scion of the old South, who knew the people of the cotton belt, said the planter would never yield to such a proposal. But, there were topics of conversation more pleasant than politics and Lincoln soon learned that his guest was versed in all the traditions of Hardin County and he delighted in asking him questions about his old home. During this brief visit, a lasting friendship was formed. When Helm bade the Lincolns good-bye upon his departure for Kentucky, none of them realized what a turmoil the country would be facing in four years when Helm would lead a Southern army and Lincoln would find himself on the crest of a volcanic government.

As the country moved toward civil war, Helm argued that there would be no conflict. He would not believe it possible that the American people could be so aroused as to divide into two sections and turn and rend each other. Yet, he had foresight enough to feel that he should re-enter the military service. In 1860, he was appointed Assistant-Inspector General of the Kentucky State Guard and he took an active part in organizing and arming that body of fighting men. This was the year of the presidential election and he watched with anxiety the comet-like rise of Abraham Lincoln across the political horizon. He admired the man, but he could not vote for him. In fact, Helm was so imbued with the political principles of his father that he worked against his brother-in-law's candidacy. For whom he voted, there appears to be no record, but it is not at all difficult to hazard a guess that the man of his choice was that esteemed Whig of the old school, John Bell, who ran for the presidency on the Constitutional Union ticket.

Lieutenant Alexander H. Todd served as aide-de-camp on the staff of General Ben Hardin Helm while he commanded the Second Brigade. He was the second half-brother of Mrs. Lincoln to lose his life for the Confederate cause. On March 4, 1861, he witnessed the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President, having received a special invitation while he resided in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky.

Yet, in spite of the States Rights Democrats and the advocates of agrarian principles, Abraham Lincoln was elected president and the Southern movement, which is a rather mild way to describe secession, was inaugurated. It was soon apparent to Helm that he must decide upon his future course, and in March, 1861, he went to Washington in quest of a commission. Having a professional connection with the army, he had a reverence for the country's flag, which to him had always symbolized one nation, and not a hodge-podge of confederations. Yet, he was a Kentuckian and a son of the South and he determined that, regardless of the consequences, he would never turn upon his own native soil. Helm still clung to one hope — that the indignation of the South against the incoming Lincoln administration would subside and that all would be peaceful again. But like many other rational men, who had no solution to cope with the situation, he watched helplessly the division of the Union.

At the time when the secession movement was still confined to the deep South, Helm made a second trip to Washington to visit the President. This time he traveled to the capital, because he had received a cordial, personal invitation from the Chief Executive, who was cognizant of the fact that Helm was thinking of again

The Children of Robert S. Todd

Robert S. Todd and Eliza Parker (first wife) had seven children, six of whom reached maturity. Elizabeth married Ninian W. Edwards, Frances married William Wallace, Levi married Louisa Searles, divorced, Mary married Abraham Lincoln, Ann married C. M. Smith, and George married Miss ..... Curry. All the children of the first family, with the exception of George, were loyal to the Union. Robert S. Todd and Elizabeth Humphreys (second wife) had nine children, eight of whom reached maturity. Margaret married C. H. Kellogg, Samuel was not married, David married a Mrs. ..... Williamson, Martha married Clement White, Emilie married Ben Hardin Helm, Alexander was not married, Elodie married N. H. R. Dawson, and Katherine married W. W. Herr. All the children of the second family, with the exception of Margaret, were southern sympathizers.

Lieutenant Wm. Wallace Herr was aide-de-camp on the staff of General Ben Hardin Helm while he commanded the First Kentucky Brigade. He married in January, 1866, Katherine Bodley (Kitty) Todd, the sister of Mrs. Helm and the half-sister of Mrs. Lincoln. As a widow, Mrs. Lincoln never had the opportunity to see or make the acquaintance of W. W. Herr.

entering the Army of the United States. Even at the time when the nation's eyes were focused upon Major Robert Anderson at Fort Sumter and there was talk about whether or not that island fortress should be surrendered to the Confederate government, he could not believe there would be a war.

In spite of his success in the legal profession, Ben Hardin Helm's first love was the army. Lincoln knew he was still a strong Southern-Rights Democrat, yet, not because of this, but in spite of it, he handed the young man a sealed envelope containing an attractive offer of a position. "Ben," he said, "here is something for you. Think it over by yourself and let me know what you will do." Lincoln anticipated the struggle Helm would have in accepting or rejecting the commission he had secured for him, because day by day the country was approaching nearer to the opening of hostilities. In fact, Lincoln was even willing to hold out another inducement, namely, that to prevent him from using his sword directly or indirectly for the coercion of the Southern states and against the people of Kentucky, he would be sent to the frontier and be spared the horrors of a fratricidal war.

The sealed envelope contained a coveted commission—paymaster in the United States Army with the rank of major. What was more, it was highly probable that promotions might come as he gained favor and as the Army was expanded to meet the ominous crisis. The offer stunned Helm when he considered that this position was presented to him at the age of thirty. Such a commission was exceptional for his years, and during his entire career nothing so attractive as this offer had ever before appealed to him. The office of paymaster with the rank of major was far more important than anything he had expected from Lincoln or had even imagined in his most fitful dreams. It was the ideal position for Helm because of his clerical abilities as a result of his work in the legal profession.

This magnanimous offer on the part of Lincoln brought from Helm a confession. "The position you offer me," he said, "is beyond what I had expected in my most hopeful dreams. It is the place above all others which suits me, Lincoln. You have been kind and generous to me beyond anything I have known. I have no claim upon you, for I opposed your candidacy and did what I could for the election of another, but with no unkindly feeling towards you; I wish I could see my way. I will try to do what is right. Don't let this offer be made public yet. You shall have my answer in a few days."

It appears that destiny had a hand in making Helm determine his course. In Washington he sought out his old friends — Southern friends, and they exerted an undue influence upon him. Yet, he likely would have reached the same conclusion even if he had discounted the advice of his old comrades. On the same day he had received Lincoln's offer, Helm called upon Colonel Robert E. Lee, recently attached to the Second Cavalry, the same regiment he had been stationed with in Texas shortly after his graduation from West Point. Helm found Colonel Lee in a dilemma. He appeared ill or as if weighted down by some unfortunate difficulty. The Colonel was well enough in body, but temporarily broken in spirit, because he had made a fateful decision. He had resigned on April 20th, his commission in the United States army.

In such a mental state, Colonel Lee did not care to offer Helm any advice and, after reading Lincoln's offer of a commission and being apprised of the fact that the president was Helm's brother-in-law, the experienced soldier told his friend that there was going to be a dreadful war and he had determined that he would not strike at his own people. However, he did not doubt Lincoln's sincerity, but told Helm the president could not control the present trend of political chaos.

Mary Lincoln hoped Helm would accept the commission in order that she might have her attractive sister with her in the Executive Mansion. She would be the toast of Washington and the belle of every presidential reception. She told Ben that the country needed "scholarly, dignified young men in the army," but such statements only made the decision harder to determine.

In thinking over the matter of the commission, Helm realized he would be the youngest officer in the army to hold the rank of major, and, with such a start, he might, by transferring to one of the cavalry regiments, become a colonel within a year's time. He was ambitious and in his pocket was a brilliant career folded and sealed in an envelope from the President of the United States. The only thing he would be required to do would be to accept it. Also, he had great admiration for Lincoln, he was fond of his sister-in-law, and his wife would delight in the gaieties of Washington society.

Upon his departure for Kentucky, he bade Mary Lincoln farewell and again she expressed the desire that both he and Emilie would make their home with them in the Executive Mansion. As a farewell gesture, Helm clasped Lincoln's hand and then parted. This was the Lincolns' last glimpse of their fine, upstanding brother-in-law.

Upon Helm's arrival at home, he went to Frankfort and while in the state capital he met Simon Bolivar Buckner, who was then Inspector-General of the Kentucky State Guard with the rank of major-general. Buckner had been Helm's instructor at West Point and their warm friendship and his high regard for Buckner's judgment caused his loyalty to the Union to waver. Buckner was going with the Confederacy and this fact caused Helm to lean further toward the South in the approaching conflict. Next he talked with Thomas B. Monroe, Jr., Secretary of State of Kentucky and a staunch defender of States Rights. Helm called on other friends and discovered that their sympathies were also with the South.

Kentucky at this time was in great turmoil over the secession movement and Helm could not stand idly by and watch the approach of disaster. He was not a man to "halt between two opinions." He realized he could no longer delay making his decision, because this conflict would be a civil war and he did not intend to fight against his own cherished principles.

(Continued to February, 1972, issue)

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BRIG.-GEN. BEN HARDIN HELM
MRS. LINCOLN'S "REBEL" BROTHER-IN-LAW

(Continued from the January, 1972 issue)

Helm's Southern leanings were undoubtedly strengthened by Governor Beriah Magoffin's reply to Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, who asked Kentucky for four regiments of militia for immediate service. His dispatch dated April 15, 1861, stated, "I say, emphatically, Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States." Accordingly, he penned a letter to Lincoln declining the commission and his refusal was recorded by the War Department with the following entry:

"Helm, Ben Hardin, nominated for paymaster in the United States Army, April 27, 1861. Declined."

Nevertheless, Helm remained grateful to Lincoln for his kind offer and, even after he had taken the field at the head of Conferedate troops, he sent felicitous messages to the president in 1861 and 1862.

Having embraced the cause of the South "with all the enthusiasm of his extremely ardent and enthusiastic nature," Helm visited the Confederate capital at Montgomery, Alabama, to pay his respects to Jefferson Davis and to offer his services for military duty to help the Southern cause. The provisional president of the Confederacy informed Helm that the South already had more troops than they could adequately arm and equip. Davis suggested to Helm that he return to Kentucky and work from a political angle in an attempt to bring his native state into the Confederacy and help win independence for all the slave states.

A photograph of Mrs. Ben Hardin Helm made in 1864.

Helm was a soldier and not a politician and his interest in military affairs caused him first to affiliate with the Kentucky State Militia in attempting to establish a condition of strict neutrality. In the spring of 1861, he took up his work as the Assistant Inspector General of the State Guard and on several occasions he was ordered to enforce upon the people of Kentucky the neutrality policy which soon was proven to be impracticable. Later he used his influence to recruit for the Confederacy the First Regiment of Kentucky Cavalry. His reputation in Kentucky was such that:

"One blast upon his bugle-horn was worth a thousand men."

The soldiers for the First Regiment of Cavalry were recruited from the different sections of the state and the leadership of Helm was of such a character as to attract a superior class of men to the colors, not usually found in other organizations of the same numerical strength. For this work Helm received from his government a colonel's commission in September, 1861, and he took command of the ten companies which constituted the First Regiment of Kentucky Cavalry. These men were mustered into the Confederate army at Bowling Green, Kentucky, and their colonel instituted a training routine which soon transformed the raw recruits into an army of trained soldiers. Helm's training routine was "company drill in the forenoon, regimental drill in the afternoon, brigade drill on Friday, inspection on Saturday, saber exercise between times and guard and fatigue duty to occupy leisure hours." However, in spite of the arduous tasks, the personal influence of Colonel Helm was felt by every man in his command. He was kind and affable to his troops, but at the same time he maintained a military dignity that did not breed contempt. The men of the First Regiment of Kentucky Cavalry were all of the opinion that their leader was professionally skilled, which of course was a comfort to every soldier in his command.

While Helm's regiment was in training in Southern Kentucky, they engaged in outpost and scout duty, and this body of troops became a kind of corps of observation. Even when the Confederate army abandoned Bowling Green, it was Colonel Helm's duty to cover the retreat. Arriving in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, February 23, 1862, he was placed under the orders of General John C. Breckinridge, where his regiment was temporarily brigaded with the Kentucky Infantry. Upon receiving an order to observe the movements of the Union forces on the Tennessee River, he took up his station at Burnsville, Mississippi, and guarded the approaches to the town of Corinth.

Knowing of his experience in scout duty and regarding him as a capable officer, General Albert Sidney Johnston sent Helm on a tour of observation of the territory between the Union position on the Tennessee and Nash-

ville. Taking with him a select body of cavalrymen, Colonel Helm set out for his duties around the latter part of March and during the first few days of April he reported to Johnston the rapid approach of the Union general, Don Carlos Buell, and he indicated that it was likely he would be able to join General U. S. Grant's forces on April 6th.

Johnston, basing his plans upon Colonel Helm's observations, planned to attack Grant on April 4th, before he could be reinforced by Buell, but he was prevented from doing this, because of the difficulty of transporting his artillery over the wet and soft country roads. The failure to attack Grant before he was reinforced by Buell resulted in a defeat for the Confederate forces and the death of the able Kentuckian, General Johnston. During the battle of Shiloh, Helm's command, the First Kentucky Cavalry, was required to hold its position on the Tennessee to guard the approaches to Johnston's left and rear and with such an assignment they found no opportunity for brilliant action. A detailed account of the activities of Colonel Helm at the time of the battle of Shiloh has never been revealed due to the secret nature of his work in scouting the enemy. Nevertheless, his efforts were observed by his superior officers and won for him the warm encomiums of those who understood the importance of his mission.

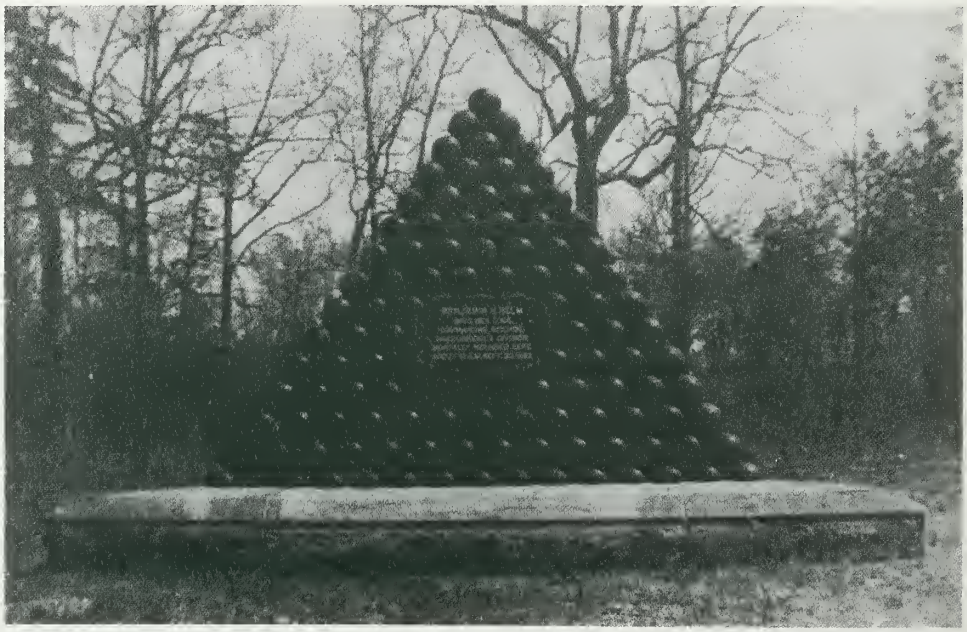
After Shiloh, Colonel Helm found himself in line for promotion and on April 17, 1862, General Pierre G. T. Beauregard announced he was to become a brigadier-general with the appointment predated March 14th. Brigadier General Helm was then ordered to report to General Breckinridge, which he was able to do on the 26th of April. He was then assigned to the command of the Third Brigade of Infantry of the Reserve Corps, which consisted of Arkansas, Mississippi and Missouri regiments. Helm was disappointed with his command, because he had under him no Kentucky troops. This condition, however, did not exist for any lengthy period of time, because, on July 8th, at Vicksburg, another change was made in the Reserve Corps, when the regiments under Brigadier General J. M. Hawes were designated as the Second Brigade and placed under the command of General Helm. The troops of this brigade consisted of men from Kentucky, Alabama and Mississippi.

Upon assuming command of the Second Brigade, General Helm appointed his staff and, among the half dozen competent officers whom he named, he picked Major Thomas H. Hayes, his brother-in-law and a resident of Hardin County, Kentucky, and Lieutenant Alexander H. Todd, of Lexington, another brother-in-law, to act in the capacity of assistant inspector general and aide-de-camp respectfully. These men were destined to see action within the month at the battle of Baton Rouge. It was the plan of General Breckinridge to capture that place, with the assistance of the immense iron-clad ram, the *Arkansas*, which was to cooperate with his land force. The city was occupied by a Union army under the command of General Thomas Williams, who was successful, although he lost his life, in driving Breckinridge back. Shortly before the attack on Baton Rouge on August 5th, Breckinridge's men were waiting for daylight in order to make a charge when an unfortunate accident occurred. Some mounted rangers were placed behind the artillery and infantry, but in the darkness they eased forward, because they were eager to get into the fray, and in riding to the front they encountered Union sentries. This caused an exchange of shots to be fired. The Confederate rangers then galloped back to their own lines amidst a hail of fire, and this action provoked additional firing between the Confederate troops and their mounted horsemen.

The results were tragic and among other casualties Brigadier General Helm was dangerously injured by a fall from his horse, being knocked over and contused by the running cavalry. Lieutenant Todd, Mrs. Lincoln's half-brother, was killed from one of the aimless shots that was fired during the confusion. He was the second brother to lose his life, as Samuel Todd was killed while serving with a Louisiana regiment at Shiloh. The death of this young lieutenant, who as a child had played with Robert Lincoln, must have saddened the president's household.

General Helm's injury was of such a serious nature as to render him disabled for weeks, and Colonel Thomas H. Hunt, who had immediately assumed command of his brigade in the action before Baton Rouge, was given temporary command of the troops while his commander recovered. By September, General Helm was again able to report for duty and he was assigned the command of the post of Chattanooga. Later he was transferred to the command of the Eastern District, Department of the Gulf, with headquarters at Pollard, Alabama. This transfer was made after General Braxton Bragg's army had passed Chattanooga on his retreat from Kentucky. The reason for assigning General Helm to the Department of the Gulf was due to Confederate apprehension of an advance on the part of the Federals operating from Pensacola.

A few months later the Confederate government found a more important assignment for General Helm. By the direction of President Davis, he was ordered on January 31, 1863, to relinquish his command of the Eastern District, Department of the Gulf, and to report to General William Joseph Hardee for the command of the brigade of the late Brigadier General Roger W. Hanson who had been killed at the battle of Stone's River. Hardee ordered Helm to report to Breckinridge for the command of the First Kentucky Brigade, which consisted of the Second, Fourth, Sixth and Ninth Kentucky Regiments, Forty-first Alabama Regiment and Captain Robert L. Cobbs' (Kentucky) Battery. Helm was delighted with the assignment, because of the great number of Kentuckians found in his command. His men had unusual confidence in his leadership and the morale of the brigade was greatly enhanced. General Helm took up his assignment on Feb. 16, 1863, and he immediately selected his staff officers. Of the seven men who were chosen, two were from his home community



This cannon-ball pyramid marks the approximate spot on the Chickamauga battlefield where General Ben Hardin Helm fell mortally wounded on September 20, 1863.

of Hardin County and one of his aides-de-camp was Lieutenant William Wallace Herr, who married in January, 1866, Katherine Bodley ("Kitty") Todd, the sister of Mrs. Helm and a half-sister of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln.

For several months the First Kentucky Brigade, which was a part of the division commanded by General Breckinridge, was more or less idle. While they were stationed in middle Tennessee at Wartrace, Manchester, Beech Grove and Hoover's Gap, General Helm drilled his men and became active in his duties as a commander. When Breckinridge was absent, it devolved upon him to command the division, which was good training for a brigadier. Due to the fact that time and again their divisional or brigade commander was absent, or transferred to other commands, or killed in battle, the expatriated Kentuckians often thought of their brigade as an orphan — hence the use of the name "Orphan Brigade" later became current.

While waiting for orders, the First Kentucky Brigade was challenged by the brigade of General Daniel Adams for competitive drill, and the bid was accepted by General Helm. The regiments now contended for the championship of the army and not simply for the division, because it was admitted that Adams' brigade was one of the best drilled in the Army of Tennessee and the Kentuckians claimed they could beat "the world on anything required of soldiers." The drills got under way and the competition was so keen that many high ranking officers of the Confederate army were present to witness the exhibitions. Even his excellency, Jefferson Davis, was apprised of the event and in a letter to the president dated April 15, 1863, Colonel William Preston Johnston stated that the Kentucky Brigade commanded by General Helm had in their performance indicated that they were "rapid, yet precise," that "in . . . appearance" they were "tough and active and they will compare for efficiency with any brigade in the Confederate army." Before the drills had ended, the division of Breckinridge was ordered on an expedition into Mississippi, but the general consensus of opinion was that the Kentuckians were the best trained.

Breckinridge's men did not relish the Mississippi expedition. They felt that expatriated Mississippians should be ordered to that theatre of war. The Kentuckians desired to stay somewhat near their own home state, and they left General Breckinridge know how they felt about the matter. He then took up the question with General Bragg, who left the decision up to Breckinridge. At this time a coolness existed between Bragg and Breckinridge, because of their disagreement over tactical questions during the battle of Stone's River or Murfreesboro. Breckinridge's men found how the matter stood and, when they realized that to go with Breckinridge would be to support him against Bragg, the entire division started on the Mississippi campaign. The object of the expedition was to reinforce General Joseph E. Johnston, who in turn was to relieve General John C. Pemberton, then under siege at Vicksburg. Helm's brigade spent the entire month of June, 1863, in the vicinity of Jackson, Mississippi, fortifying their position, picketing and following the general routine of camp life.

Day by day General Pemberton's position was growing more serious and, on July 1st, the troops of General Johnston were ordered forward to undertake the hazardous venture beyond the Big Black River for an attack upon the Federal land force around Vicksburg. The weather at this time was almost unbearable, the roads were dusty, and drinking water was scarce. Many men died from exhaustion and sunstroke. The fall of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, necessitated a retreat of Johnston's army, which had not had sufficient time to relieve Pemberton. Federal troops now harrassed Johnston's army, and from July 10th, to the 17th ,a series of skirmishes between the advance lines occurred at irregular intervals. On the 16th of July, Johnston ordered a retreat by a pontoon bridge over Pearl River to Morton.

Helm's Kentucky Brigade acted as a rear guard for the army, but they were not attacked, as the Federals did not follow. Establishing a camp on the 21st near Morton, afterward called "Camp Hurricane," the weary army settled down for a much needed rest. On July 22nd, General Helm wrote to his wife:

"As usual we are on a grand retreat, the sufferings of which, so far as I am personally concerned, are unparalleled in the war. We have to drink water that, in ordinary times, you wouldn't offer your horse; and I have hardly slept out of a swamp since we left Jackson. This is the sixth day, and we have not come much over forty miles. Our retreat is very slow and deliberate. The enemy have not annoyed us."

Mrs. Ben Hardin Helm, "Mother" of the Orphan Brigade. One of the most significant events in her life following the war was the re-interment of the remains of her husband on September 19, 1884, (at the re-union of the First Kentucky Brigade of Infantry) in the private Helm Cemetery at Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

At Camp Hurricane, Helm's Brigade rested for about a month. Their stay there was quiet, with the least duties assigned to them in their entire military careers. This complacency, however, was broken on August 26th, when the division of General Breckinridge was ordered to travel by rail and steamer, by the way of Mobile, to Chattanooga (Tyner's Station), to reinforce Bragg. Helm's Brigade went into camp on September 2nd, and by the eighth day of that month the movements which were the preliminary steps leading to the great battle of Chickamauga were initiated. They marched and countermarched and, finally after complicated preliminary military maneuvers, the division of Breckinridge bivouacked on September 18th, near Chickamauga Creek.

Approaching Chickamauga Creek from Pigeon Mountain, Breckinridge's division took their place on the east side of that stream. Their position was near Glass's Mill and they constituted the extreme left of the infantry of the army. Breckinridge ordered the Second Kentucky across the ford near Glass's Mill in order to determine the strength of the Federal forces, and the Sixth Kentucky was placed in close supporting distance. Other forces were dispatched along the creek, and on the morning of the 19th the remainder of Helm's brigade, along with other regiments, was sent across Glass's Ford. The advance position of Helm's brigade drew fire from the Federals.

While this minor engagement was taking place, General Breckinridge received orders from Lieutenant General D. H. Hill to withdraw his position and to proceed to a point about three miles south of Lee and Gordon's Mill. This place was on the road leading from Chattanooga to Lafayette, and was an ideal situation for guarding the approach to that road from Glass's Mill and the ford above. A few casualties resulted from the directed change in the position, but the losses were slight. However, this point was not held for any length of time, as Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk was moving the divisions of his wing as so many men upon a chess board.

The last important movement of Breckinridge's division occurred during the night of September 19th, and the morning of the 20th, when he was ordered to lengthen the battle line upon the right of Major Patrick R. Cleburne which placed the Kentuckians on the extreme right of the infantry line of battle, General Helm's brigade constituted the extreme left of Breckinridge's line, General Stovall's was in the center, and General Adam's brigade was on the right. With orders to advance on the Federals, Cleburne's and Breckinridge's divisions, after some delays, moved forward about 9:30 A.M., and this phase of the battle of Chickamauga opened with great fury and Helm's brigade, which had lunged forward with terrific force, turned out to be in the center of the fiercest fighting.

About 10:00 A.M. while Breckinridge's division was moving forward against the Federals, it was noticed that for some reason a part of the left brigade under Helm had not advanced simultaneously with the rest of the division. Later it was determined that they were facing breastworks situated in angular positions, which subjected Helm's men not only to fire in front but to a fierce enfilading fire from the left. This portion of the line proved to be one of the most hotly contested positions of the entire battlefield. Here gallant Kentuckians by the hundreds "gave their lives in reckless fashion," as they pushed ahead under the withering cross fire. General Helm, their beloved leader, riding boldly toward the works of the enemy was hit in the right side by a musket ball and fell mortally stricken from his horse.

Immediately after Helm had received his fatal wound, Colonel Joseph H. Lewis of the Sixth Kentucky was ordered to command the brigade, but the fire of the Federals drove the Confederates back two hundred yards to the rear and this left a gap in Breckinridge's line, which caused much tactical trouble and a great loss of life during the remainder of the battle. The rest of the encounter is of course a matter of historical record, and even the dying General Helm at the close of the day heard that the battle of Chickamauga was a victory for the Confederates.

When General Helm fell on the morning of September 20th, 1863, he was carried from the field by his two aides, Lieutenant William Wallace Herr and Lieutenant John B. Pirtle. Upon an examination of the wound in his right side, it was soon determined by the military surgeons of the field hospital that there was no hope for his recovery. He lingered for several hours and during the night of that fatal day he expired. The corpse of the thirty-two-year-old brigadier-general was then conveyed to the home of Colonel W. H. Dabney in Atlanta, where the remains lay until the 23rd. A funeral service for the brave soldier was held in the Episcopal Church, followed by interment in the Atlanta Cemetery with military honors.

Immediately after the battle of Chickamauga, dispatches were received by Lincoln concerning the engagement and the unconfirmed report of the death of General Helm was a great shock to him. Senator David Davis called on Lincoln on the 22nd of September and he found Lincoln suffering intense grief. "Davis," he said, "I feel as David of old did when he was told of the death of Absalom." Senator Davis understood that Lincoln was grieving over the death of his brother-in-law and he immediately excused himself. On September 24, 1863, Lincoln sent a telegram to Major-General William S. Rosecrans at Chattanooga stating that he had read the southern account of the battle of Chickamauga in the Richmond papers in which, among other Conferedate generals, Helm of Kentucky was listed as killed. Yet, at the same time, he explained to Rosecrans that a Brigadier-General John (B. H.) Helm was listed as among those wounded. In all likehood Lincoln held out a faint hope for awhile that General Helm had been wounded and not killed, but such was not the case.

On the same day that he wired General Rosecrans, Lincoln sent a telegram to his wife, who was then residing at the Fifth Avenue Hotel while on a visit to New York City. In terse sentences he told her of the battle in which "we are worsted." Among the casualties, he informed her rather coldly, because in a telegram he could not well afford to show any sympathy for a rebel general, that "your brother-in-law, Helm," was among those killed in the engagement.

In some sections of the war-torn country, news traveled rather slowly and on October 11, 1863, Governor John L. Helm wrote Mrs. Robert S. Todd of Lexington that he had just received the news of the death of his son, who fell at Chickamauga. His letter was rather pathetic:

"Elizabethtown, Ky.
October 11, 1863

Dear Madam:

It is due to you that I announce the death of my son. He fell in the battle south of Chattanooga I have unquestionable information. He was buried in Atlanta. It is probable Emilie was there. Could you through friends or by your own relationship secure for Emilie a passport home. If she could be allowed to come to Nashville I would go after her, if a pass would be allowed me. I am totally at a loss to know how to begin. Could you or one of your daughters write to Mrs. Lincoln and through her secure a pass?

In deep sorrow
I am respectfully
John L. Helm."

Governor Helm was correct in his assumption that Emilie had attended her husband's funeral. Having accompanied her husband South, she was visiting her sister, Mrs. N. H. R. Dawson at Selma, Alabama, at the time of General Helm's death, and she had been notified by General Bragg to come to Atlanta for the funeral services. She arrived just in time to be present at the sad rites.

After the funeral, Mrs. Helm planned to return with her two children to her mother's home in Lexington and General Bragg had promised her that he would intercede for her and try to obtain a pass from General Grant, but that Union General was not sympathetic to the proposal. However at the suggestion of Governor Helm, Mrs. Todd, acting through the Lexington postmaster, Dr. L. Beecher Todd, a cousin of Mrs. Lincoln, asked for permission to go to Georgia and to bring her bereaved daughter and her two grandchildren home. Accordingly Lincoln obliged Mrs. Todd with the following pass which he sent by telegram in the care of the postmaster:

"War Department, October 15, 1863, L. B. Todd, Lexington:

I send the following pass to your care.

A. Lincoln

'Washington, D. C. October 15, 1863

To Whom it May Concern: Allow Mrs. Robert S. Todd, widow, to go South and bring her daughter, Mrs. General B. Hardin Helm, with her children north to Kentucky.

A. Lincoln' "

Knowing that Mrs. Helm would also need a pass as soon as she started her journey homeward, Lincoln about two months later wrote the following order:

"Executive Mansion, Washington, December 14, 1863
Whom it may concern: It is my wish that Mrs. Emily T. Helm (widow of the late General B. H. Helm, who fell in the Confederate service), now returning to Kentucky, may have protection of person and property, except as to slaves, of which I say nothing.

A. Lincoln."

Lincoln assumed, although one wonders why, that Mrs. Helm would take an oath of allegiance to the United States. He carefully prepared the following documents for her to subscribe:

"December 14, 1863—Amnesty to Mrs. E. T. Helm.
Executive Mansion, Washington, December 14, 1863
Mrs. Emily T. Helm, not being excepted from the benefits of the proclamation by the President of the United States issued on the eighth day of December, 1863, and having on this day taken and subscribed the oath according to said proclamation, she is fully relieved of all penalties and forfeitures, and remitted to all her rights — all according to said proclamation, and not otherwise; and, in regard to said restored rights of person and property, she is to be protected and afforded facilities as a loyal person.

Abraham Lincoln"

(Continued to the March, 1972 issue)

Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
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THE ATTEMPT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY

Editor's Note: The newspaper account of the attempt to steal Abraham Lincoln's body the night of November 7, 1876 (presidential election day), as reported by *The Chicago Tribune*, on Wednesday, November 8, 1876, must be one of the most sensational news stories in the history of American journalism.

A Xerox copy of the newspaper article has been called to the attention of the editor by Webb Garrison of Evansville, Indiana, who stated that "the story is of great historical importance because it was a national 'scoop' — whose veracity was at first challenged by other Chicago papers."

Of course the story was true, and the many ramifications of the plot and the people connected with the event wove itself into a bizarre and complicated narrative.

One of the most unique books in all Lincolniana was published in Springfield, Illinois, in 1890, bearing the title, *History Of An Attempt To Steal The Body Of Abraham Lincoln* . . . The author was John Carroll Power, custodian of the Lincoln Tomb, who from the very first suspected the ghoulish plot and played a leading role in the apprehension of the criminals. Power's devoted 105 pages of his 287 page book to the details of the crime. In his introduction, he wrote among other things that, "This volume is a record, in the plainest language possible, of the plottings prior to, and of the attempt to steal, the body of Abraham Lincoln, in order to make merchandise of it."

When *The Chicago Tribune* published their first story about the crime, their reporters could not foretell the eventual outcome of the case. Later, news stories would follow, but the minute details would be left for custodian, J. C. Power, to discuss and anaylze in his book in 1890. Later condensed versions of the plot were published (see "Rendezvous at Oak Ridge" by King V. Hostick) and additional facts were gleaned from newly acquired evidence. One of the most factual accounts to embody the basic evidence was the account written by Louis A. Warren for *Lincoln Lore*, Number 792, June 12, 1944, entitled "The Plot to Steal The Lincoln Corpse."

The Chicago Tribune "scoop" is reprinted for the edification of our subscribers.

R. G. M.

HORRIBLE

Dastardly Attempt to Despoil the Lincoln Monument.

Thieves Trying to Steal the Bones of the Martyr President.

Warning Given, and Steps Taken to Arrest Them.

Elmer Washburn and His Assistants Waiting in the Dark.

The Robbers Interrupted by Accident, and Contrive to Escape.

Special Dispatch to *The Tribune*.

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 7. — An attempt was made this evening to perpetrate one of the most infamous outrages which the mind of man can conceive of — that of stealing the bones and ashes of Abraham Lincoln. Unfortunately the perpetrators escaped, leaving, however, the evidence of their crime behind them, and though the clews are next to nothing, if human ingenuity can track them it will be done. Somehow or other, no one exactly knows how, J. C. Power, the custodian of the Lincoln monument, became impressed with the idea that there were designs upon the remains, and he communicated his suspicions to Leopard Swett and Robert Lincoln. They could hardly believe that any one, even the meanest and lowest scoundrel in the land, could conceive such a thing. However, to prevent the horse from getting out of the stable, they concluded to lock the door — to adopt precautions even should there be nothing in the feeling. Accordingly, Swett wrote Col. Stewart (Stuart), of this city, about two weeks ago, requesting him to station a guard at the monument. This was done, but no one came to disturb the corpse. Detective Tyrrell, of the United States Secret Service, whose headquarters are in Chicago, having business here, was

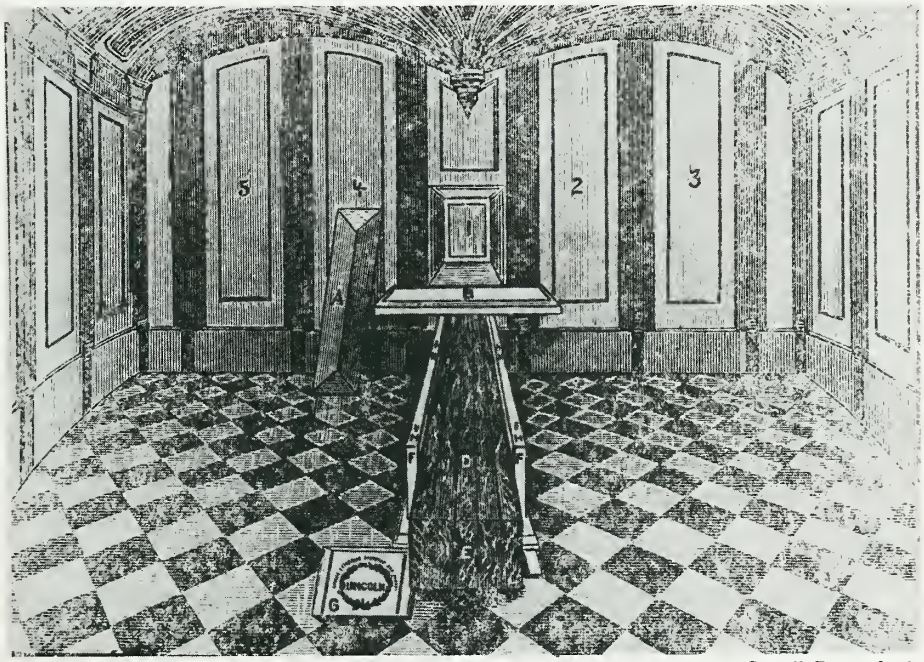

Illustration from the John Carroll Power book, *History Of An Attempt To Steal The Body Of Abraham Lincoln* . . .

Interior of the Catacomb, as the thieves left it. Crypts designed for the bodies of the Lincoln family were assigned as follows: (1) Lincoln, (2) William and Edward, (3) Thomas (Tad), (4) Mrs. Lincoln, (5) Robert. Lincoln's body rested in crypt No. 1 from September, 1871, until October, 1874, when it was placed in the marble sarcophagus. This entire arrangement of the Lincoln bodies (some members of the family were still living) was later changed. A, is the top or false lid of the marble sarcophagus. B, is the main lid of the marble sarcophagus. C, is one of the wooden temporary trestles supporting the sarcophagus. D, is the top of the red cedar coffin. E, is the end of the cedar coffin, drawn about eighteen inches out of the sarcophagus, ready to be carried away. F F, are the marble sides of the sarcophagus. H H H H, are copper dowels in the marble sides of the sarcophagus. G, is the marble end piece of the sarcophagus, bearing the inscription Lincoln, surrounded with an oaken wreath in marble. It is proper to state that this piece did not occupy the place it does in the picture, but was left by the vandals where it could not be seen from the door.

requested by Swett and Lincoln to see Mr. Power, and to look around town, and watch for suspicious characters. He arrived here three or four days ago, and at once commenced a vigorous shadowing of several of the small hotels, but he saw no one whom he recognized. This afternoon Mr. Power came into town in a hurry and hunted up Tyrrell and informed him that two very hard-looking cases had been out to the cemetery looking around, and he felt assured that they were there for no good purpose. One registered as from Racine, and the other from Kenosha, Wis. Their names are suppressed, since they have had nothing to do with what occurred later. An effort will of course be made to find out who they are, and should they prove to be innocent injustice would be done them by telling now who they are. Mr. Power, not being used to detective work, could give but meager descriptions of them. The result of the interview with Tyrrell is unknown, but he must have concluded that election night was an excellent one in which to rob the tomb.

The evening's train brought from Chicago ex-Chief of the Secret Service Elmer Washburn, who, it seems, had been requested by Swett and Lincoln to come here and aid Tyrrell. About half-past 6 Washburn, Tyrrell and three other men went out to Oakwood (Oak Ridge) and concealed themselves in Memorial Hall inside the monument to await developments. One man was posted in the labyrinth in the rear, so called because of the walls running in different directions and making numerous passage ways, these walls supporting the terrace. His object was to hear the noise made in the vault if any were made. After patiently waiting for nearly three hours, and when about tired out from standing still, the utmost silence being imparative, he heard a grating noise which lasted perhaps five minutes. Then, in a little while, came several successive thuds, as if some one was hammering. The time having arrived for action, Washburn and his men slipped out of the door, with cocked revolvers in their hands, determined to shoot to kill if any resistance was made. Just as they were turning the corner to the left one of the men accidentally exploded his revolver. The noise was very loud, so still were the surroundings, and unfortunately it was too loud, for, though there were but about 120 feet to go over, when the officers got to the door of the vault the dastardly villains were gone. They must have had some one watching to give them the signal of danger or else had come outside for a breath of fresh air and heard the snapping of the cap and ran into the woods which surrounded the monument. It is but a short distance, and a man could get within shelter and be unobservable in a quarter of a minute. The men at once scattered, and went in the direction the thieves had gone, and while dodging behind the trees, two of them exchanged shots, each mistaking the other for one of the fugitives. After shooting at each other, they cried "Wash," "Wash," indicative of a friend in such an emergency, and then they found out their mistake. The bullets whizzed close to both, and it was miraculous that they escaped injury.

No traces of the thieves being discovered, the party returned to the catacomb, and there beheld a sight which made them sad. The body, as is known perhaps, is inclosed in a lead casket. This is surrounded by a cedar case, and the receptacle of these is a marble sarcophagus. The latter had a double lid, the upper one not being as large as the other. Both had been pried off with a chisel or an ax, and somewhat chipped in the operation. The under lid was laid crosswise on the casket, the headpiece on the floor, and the upper lid standing against the wall. The casket itself was pulled out about a foot from the body of the sarcophagus, and a small piece had been taken off on the floor, where an ax with the edge full of marble-dust, an ordinary chisel, and a pair of nippers. The other tools had evidently been taken away since the lock on the iron-grated door had been sawed-off.

It should perhaps be stated that the sarcophagus was in the catacomb and not in the crypt, being thus placed in order that visitors might see it. The damage done is comparatively little.

The officers of course were disappointed at not catching the vandals, but they think it is only a question of a little time when they will be apprehended.

Only one motive can be attributed to these despoilers of the grave, and that is the hope of a reward for the restoration of the remains. If they had succeeded in carrying them off, it certainly could not have been their intention to take away the casket, for it must weigh from 500 to 600 pounds, and half a dozen men could not have carried it to the fence for transfer to a wagon in the road. It is more than likely that they intended to cut open the casket and gather up the bones and dust of the martyr-President and put them in a bag. What would have been the indignation of the country had this been done! The scheme concocted by these men is certainly unparalleled in the history of crime and, now that there is evidence of minds so debased, it is certain that measures will be taken to guard the monument and prevent future attempts. The facts given above did not come until early this morning, and are known to only a few, otherwise the outrage would have occupied as great a share of the attention of the community as the election. Words cannot express the feelings of those who do know it, and it is earnestly hoped that the double- . . . perpetrators of this attempted robbery of the remains of America's most loved President will soon be brought to justice.

A Lincoln Campaign Song - 1860

The May 5, 1908, *Oxford Democrat* of South Paris, Maine, published a Lincoln campaign song that was sung at a rally at Paris Hill, Maine, sometime in 1860. Hannibal Hamlin and his brother Elijah spoke at the rally. On the platform with them was a wooden chair said to be made of rails split by "Old Abe himself."

The text of the song was re-written in 1908 for the newspaper in response to a request from a reader. The person who wrote the words from memory (she well may have been at the rally in 1860) was Mrs. E. V. Canwell of South Paris. The singing of the Rally Song was led at the mass meeting at Paris Hill by "Mr. Locke, the army balladist." He may have been attached to the local militia.

The text of the song follows:

Hark! Hark! A signal gun is heard
Just out beyond the fort;
The good old ship of state, my boys
Is coming into port.
With tattered sails and anchor gone,
I fear the rogues will strand her.
She carried now a sorry crew,
And needs a new commander.

Old Ab'ram is the man
With a sturdy mate
From the Pine Tree State,
Old Ab'ram is the man.

Four years ago she put to sea,
With prospects brightly beaming;
Her hull was strong, her sails new bent,
And every pennant streaming.
She loved the gale, She plowed the wave,
Nor feared the deep's commotion.
Majestic gently on she sailed
Proud mistress of the ocean.

Buchanan was the man,
But his four year's trip,
Leaves a crippled ship,
Buchanan was the man.

Our ship is getting out of trim,
'Tis time to calk and grove her;
She's foul astern of human gore,
They've turned her to a slaver.
She has cruised about from coast to coast,
Her flying bondsmen hunting.
Until she strained from stem to stern,
And lost her sails in hunting.

Old Ab'ram is the man
With a sturdy mate
From the Pine Tree State,
Old Ab'ram is the man.

We'll give her what repairs she needs,
A thorough overhauling;
Her scurvey crew shall be dismissed
Into some honest calling,
Brave Lincoln soon shall take the helm,
On truth and right relying,
In calm or peace, in storm or war,
He'll keep her colors flying.

Brave Lincoln is the man,
With a sturdy mate
From the Pine Tree State
Brave Lincoln is the man.

Brig.-Gen. Ben Hardin Helm
Mrs. Lincoln's "Rebel" Brother-In-Law

(Continued from February, 1972 issue)

Through correspondence with the Todd family, Lincoln had been informed that Mrs. Helm owned some six hundred bales of cotton located in Jackson, Mississippi, and Atlanta, Georgia, over which she wished to estab-

lish a claim of ownership. To take care of this matter, Lincoln added the following postscript to the document of amnesty:

"P. S. Mrs. Helm claims to own some cotton at Jackson, Mississippi and also some in Georgia; and I shall be glad, upon either place being brought within our lines, for her to be afforded the proper facilities to show her ownership, and take her property.

A. Lincoln"

The amnesty oath which Lincoln prepared for Mrs. Helm to subscribe was as follows:

"District of Columbia
SS.:
Washington County,

I, Emily T. Helm, do solemnly swear in presence of Almighty God that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the union of the States, thereunder; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified, or held void by Congress, or by decisions of the Supreme Court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President, made during the existing rebellion, having reference to slaves so long and so far as not modified or declared void by the Supreme Court. So help me God."

Traveling northward by steamer under a flag of truce, Mrs. Helm arrived at Fortress Monroe. At that port a Federal officer came on board and told all the passengers that only those who would take the oath of allegiance to the United States would be allowed to land. In spite of her belief that she might be sent back to Georgia, the scene of her greatest sorrow, she steadfastly refused to take the oath. She was practically without funds and in great distress over the death of her gallant husband, but she remained adamant. She would not take the oath of allegiance, because her friends might feel that she had not been true to the cause for which her husband had given up his life. Her refusal was not that of bravado. The Union officers tried to reason with her, but she consistently refused to yield. She asked for permission to proceed to Washington on parole, pledging her word to return in case she was called upon to take the oath. Perplexed over the president's orders in regard to his sister-in-law, the officer in charge telegraphed Lincoln for further instructions. His reply was:

"Send her to me."

Realizing that she could not continue her journey to Kentucky, Mrs. Helm proceeded with one of her daughters to Washington, D. C. for a visit with the Lincolns. Upon her arrival at the Executive Mansion, she was cordially received. Emilie and Mary, both grief-stricken, because Mrs. Lincoln had lost her son, Willie, choked up with tears and tried to find comfort in each other's arms. After the amenities, she explained to her brother-in-law her predicament, and she told the president that she did not intend to embarrass him, or make herself conspicuous in any way, provided he would allow her to proceed to her home in Kentucky. With such explanations which Lincoln considered reasonable, she was accorded every kindness, and while a guest in the White House she occupied the bedroom which had been elaborately decorated for the visit of the Prince of Wales during the Buchanan administration.

Lincoln undoubtedly realized that Emilie's presence in the capital would start gossip-monger's tongues wagging about the rebel in the Executive Mansion. Orville H. Browning recorded in his diary that he called on the president on Monday, December 14, 1863, and that Lincoln told him "his sister-in-law, Mrs. Helm was in the house, but he did not wish it known." Evidently Lincoln was worried about the distressing financial condition of his sister-in-law, because he told Browning that "she wished an order for the protection of some cotton she had at Jackson, Mississippi. He thought she ought to have it, but he was afraid he would be censured if he did so."

If Lincoln hoped to keep Mrs. Helm's presence at the Executive Mansion a secret, he was doomed to disappointment, because this ardent Southerner could not keep her tongue when the Confederacy was assailed. After all, her husband had given his life for the South, and the least she could do would be to defend those institutions which he had cherished. As a wife of a Confederate general, Mrs. Helm was to be the butt of many vindictive remarks from Northerners who did not relish her presence in Washington.

One day Senator Ira Harris and General Daniel E. Sickles paid the Lincolns a call and, upon greeting Mrs. Helm, the General said that he had told the Senator that she was in Washington and that perhaps she could give him some news concerning his old colleague, John C. Breckinridge. Mrs. Helm replied that she had not seen General Breckinridge for quite some time and that she could give him no news concerning his friend. To all of Senator Harris's questions, she gave him non-committal answers. Evidently this angered Harris, who remarked that the Union soldiers had whipped the rebels at Chattanooga and that he had heard that "the scoundrels ran like scared rabbits." This was more than Mrs. Helm could tolerate and she remarked that the Confederates had followed the example that the Federals had "set them at Bull Run and Manassas."

General Sickles could not forget this affront and he struggled on his crutches, because he had only one leg, to the president's room to tell Lincoln about his sister-in-law. Upon hearing of the details of the conversation, Lincoln said, "The child has a tongue like the rest of the Todds." This remark appeared to have further agitated the General and in an excited and domineering voice he told Lincoln, "You should not have that rebel in your house." This dictatorial manner on the part of Sickles angered Lincoln and he informed the general that he was usually in the habit of choosing his own guests, and that Mrs. Helm was in his house because she had been ordered there.

To prevent any further embarrassing situations, no one in the Lincoln household mentioned the war or politics, and, after nearly a week's visit, Mrs. Helm planned to resume her trip to Kentucky. To spare his sister-in-law further pain, Lincoln did not mention the oath of allegiance, and, before her departure, he earnestly expressed to her his sorrow over the death of her husband. In order that she might not be molested on her journey homeward, Lincoln gave her a letter "to protect her against the mere fact of being General Helm's widow." In providing Emilie with this safeguard to protect her person and property (except as to slaves), Lincoln said, "Little sister I never knew you to do a mean thing in your life. I know you will not embarrass me in any way on your return to Kentucky."

Emilie traveled to Kentucky fully aware that she should say nothing against the Lincoln administration, because of the president's kindness to her. However, Lexington and Elizabethtown were not the peaceful, serene communities that she had known before the war. In Lexington, she found conditions exceedingly trying because of the tyrannical rule of General Stephen G. Burbridge who was enforcing martial law upon the citizens of the Blue Grass Country. In fact, the blustering threats of Burbridge kept Mrs. Helm in a constant state of fear and she was afraid to leave the house. Nevertheless her presence in Lexington did not go unnoticed by the Union authorities, and, within less than a year after her return home, a malicious rumor of treasonable acts against the government was trumped up against her. Upon hearing the charges, the president wrote General Burbridge the following letter:

"Washington, August 8, 1864

Major-General Burbridge, Lexington, Ky.:

Last December Mrs. Emily T. Helm, half sister of Mrs. L., and widow of the rebel General Ben Hardin Helm, stopped here on her way from Georgia to Kentucky, and I gave her a paper, as I remember, to protect her against the mere fact of her being General Helm's widow. I hear a rumor today that you recently sought to arrest her, but was prevented by her presenting the paper from me. I do not intend to protect her against the consequences of disloyal words or acts, spoken or done by her since her return to Kentucky, and if the papers given her by me can be construed to give her protection for such words or acts, it is hereby revoked **pro tanto.** Deal with her for current conduct just as you would with any other.

A. Lincoln"

In the light of this letter it would appear that Mrs. Helm had actually violated a confidence, that once she was safely home in Kentucky she had forgotten Lincoln's

request and her promise not to embarrass him or the administration. Yet, there are certain indications which will lead one to believe that the rumors about her disloyal acts and words were not true. While she sympathized with the war-torn South, she was careful that no deed or statement of hers could be so construed as to make Lincoln regret his consideration of her. In Kentucky, Mrs. Helm was accorded every kindness and sympathy by her friends, irrespective of conflicting opinions, and it is not likely that she made many enemies, because of her sincere loyalty to the South. Of course, her position in Lexington society naturally kept her in the eyes of the public and some Federal officers might have been resentful of her Southern learnings, which apparently had official sanction.

Only once did Emilie Helm have occasion to use Lincoln's protection paper and that was when she asked a Federal officer to keep his troops, who had camped near her home, from trespassing and to cease taking her family's food as it was being cooked in their kitchen. The officer, in all likelihood, taken aback by the presidential order, complied with the request in a good-natured way. How General Burbridge learned of Mrs. Helm's immunity by presidential sanction is not clear. It is to be supposed the Federal officer reported Mrs. Helm's use of the protection paper to General Burbridge, his superior in command, and the latter, desiring to clear up the matter in case Mrs. Helm should make herself obnoxious, undoubtedly had the matter referred to President Lincoln, who appears to have been apprised of the circumstances through the unreliable channel of a rumor. The fact remains, however, that Mrs. Helm was not arrested and never had any trouble with the United States authorities, because she "could never have been so lost to (her) sense of obligation to President Lincoln."

In spite of Mrs. Helm's commendable personal conduct, the activities of her sister, Miss Katherine ("Kitty") Todd, and her mother, Mrs. Robert S. Todd, in behalf of the cause of the South may have placed the young widow in an extremely unfavorable light. Miss Todd and her mother were unusually active in the fall of 1864 when they attempted to prevent the infliction of the death penalty upon Captain McGee and Walter Ferguson, two Confederate soldiers who had ridden with the troops of General John Hunt Morgan. The Todds tried desperately to have the order of General Burbridge rescinded and they even went so far as to petition Lincoln to commute the sentence, but their efforts were in vain. It is believed that the President would have yielded to their pleas, but the petition of mercy was intercepted and Lincoln did not receive their request for commutation. Consequently, the two men were taken out of prison on November 15th, and were hanged near the fair-grounds in Lexington.

It was the policy of Lincoln to commute most of the death sentences of Burbridge, who considered criticism of the administration as treason; however, the constant, if not righteous, agitation of the Todds against the general's authority in Lexington must have caused Lincoln considerable embarrassment. Lincoln would have been especially chagrined in the summer and fall of 1864 to have had political capital made of the safeguard he gave Mrs. Helm. His letter to Burbridge nipped in the bud any criticism that might have arisen over the protection Mrs. Helm enjoyed, and yet at the same time Lincoln's orders did not place her position in jeopardy. She was an aristocratic lady whose position, whether the authorities liked it or not, placed her beyond the ordinary clutches of military authority. Lincoln would have not allowed Burbridge to deal with his sister-in-law, or any other member of the Todd family "just as you would with any other," in spite of the fact that such words were recorded over his signature.

A further proof that Mrs. Helm did not violate the confidence of Lincoln is indicated by his interest in attempting to help her get possession of her six hundred bales of cotton. In January, 1865, Lincoln granted passes to General James W. Singleton and Judge James Hughes to go South to buy cotton and tobacco and at this time he gave the men a brief history of his sister-in-law and told them of her ownership of a considerable number of bales of cotton which she had in the South. Lincoln requested Singleton and Hughes, if possible, to make some arrangement with Mrs. Helm about the sale of this commodity.

During the latter part of March, 1865, Emilie Helm, along with a companion, Mrs. Bernard Pratt, a relative of President Zachary Taylor and General Singleton, obtained passes to go to Richmond, Virginia, to see about the cotton, but she selected an inopportune time for a business trip, because the fall of Richmond was at last about to become an accomplished fact. Mrs. Helm was advised to leave immediately, which she did on the next flag of truce boat. By orders of General E. O. C. Ord, Captain Robert Lincoln, her nephew, was instructed to accompany Mrs. Helm and her friend from Fortress Monroe to a point near Petersburg. She arrived in Washington on March 25th, and registered at the Metropolitan Hotel. By this time Lincoln had secured from General Grant an order for the protection of the cotton, the great bulk of which was in storage in Atlanta, Georgia. The cotton had survived the scorched-earth policy of the Confederacy and the invading Yankee armies of the North, but, before she could sell it or have it insured, an accidental fire destroyed it. While in Washington and Baltimore on this business trip, Emilie did not call on her sister and brother-in-law, because they were at that time visiting with General Grant at City Point, Virginia.

As her residence in Kentucky had been intolerable, Emilie bought a home in Madison, Indiana, which was north of the Ohio River, where she could remain free of the turmoil of military rule. There she became the organist in Christ Church, where, as an accomplished musician, she earned a livelihood. The remainder of her long life was spent in devotion to her gallant husband's memory, and her cruel fate was softened somewhat by her interest in her three children, Katherine, Elodie and Ben Hardin. As a widow in her early twenties, she had as her main purpose in life the education of her children, and this expense necessitated the acceptance of some suitable position.

After residing in Madison for ten or twelve years, she moved to Louisville and for about two years taught a class in music. This gave her an opportunity to visit on many occasions the ancestral estate of the Kentucky Helms, located near the northern city limits of Elizabethtown. Upon the renewal of her acquaintances in the little village where she and her husband had known so much happiness, she decided to return to Elizabethtown where she was appointed postmistress by President Chester A. Arthur, an office which she retained for about twelve years. In Elizabethtown she purchased a dignified, gray brick home on Poplar Street which had been built about the year 1820.

Moving again to Louisville, after giving up her position in the Elizabethtown postoffice, she made her residence in that city for a short period. Ben Hardin had always promised his mother to buy a Blue Grass farm, as soon as he could make the money, and in 1912 he purchased the colonial home of Colonel Abraham Bowman, situated near Lexington on the Bowman's Mill Road. This farm was formerly the property of General Levi Todd on which their pioneer ancestor had erected Todds Fort in 1778. There, in an atmosphere of the past, surrounded by the trappings of her soldier-husband, and deeply imbued with the Lincoln tradition, she died February 20, 1930, at the remarkable age of ninety-three years.

The most significant event in her life, after the war had ended and peace again hovered over the Southland, was the occasion of the reunion of the First Kentucky (Orphan) Brigade of Infantry at Elizabethtown on September 19, 1884. It was at this solemn and impressive gathering of Confederate veterans that the remains of General Ben Hardin Helm was re-interred in the burial ground of his fathers, in a private cemetery on the ancestral acres of his pioneer forebears. Here, in the shadow of a great granite shaft erected by the State of Kentucky in honor of Governor John L. Helm, the Confederate general's remains were placed among his kindred.

"Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone
  In deathless song shall tell,
When many a vanished age hath flown,
  The story how ye fell;
Nor wreck, nor change, nor winter's blight,
  Nor Time's remorseless doom,
Shall dim one ray of Glory's light
  That gilds your deathless tomb."

—Theodore O'Hara,
The Bivouac of the Dead

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Lincoln stories keep memories alive

By John Friedlein

The stories Brenda Wilcox Heady received a few Christmases ago were more appropriate than most gifts.

Heady is big on stories, especially those about the boyhood playmate of her great-great-great-great uncle, Austin Gollaher.

So it isn't surprising that when Elizabeth Marion started her series of remembrances with — As a young girl, I went to a Daughters of the American Revolution meeting and the speaker was Emilie Helm — Heady asked herself: Emilie Helm … did she say Emilie Helm.

Helm was Abraham Lincoln's sister-in-law.

"This weird feeling came over me," Heady said. She took Marion's hand in the eerie orange light of the low sun.

"You have physically linked me with the Civil War," she told her, "and I didn't think that was possible."

Marion was 100-ish when she talked to Heady, but just a teen when she got to know Helm after the DAR presentation — when she heard first-hand accounts of Abraham Lincoln.

Heady, you see, is a big Abe fan.

She lives in Elizabethtown now, but hails from Magnolia, near the two farms where Lincoln spent his first seven years. When she and her family would drive around Hodgenville's square (made a circle in preparation for next year's bicentennial birthday bash) they'd salute the former president's statue.

Tales of young Lincoln have filtered down through generations of such families. Heady heard hers from grandma Sallie Hornback Wilcox of Upton.

She learned about a gangly little boy who would sit on a lard can at a country store, who'd sometimes get a piece of candy from the shopkeeper.

"I don't think he had many treats in his life," Heady said.

Life was a struggle to be met with a strong back, or so the bookworm's dad wanted him to believe.

The stories in Heady's family are full of conflict between the two. In fact, they have it that Abe claimed he wasn't Thomas Lincoln's son.

"He believed that his father was a wealthy Virginia landowner," Heady said.

Abe and Gollaher were close enough to discuss such matters. Gollaher actually once saved Lincoln's life when, after Abe fell into a rushing creek, he grabbed a limb and used it to pull his friend to shore.

Later in life, Lincoln begged Gollaher to visit him in Washington. But Gollaher never did because he feared trains.

Lincoln, it seems, wanted to keep in touch with his roots. This also could help explain his fondness for Helm,

no as an adult lived in Elizabethtown, the county seat of his Kentucky home.

arion told Heady about the first time the two met. Lincoln had just married Helm's half-sister, Mary Todd, hen the couple visited the Todds in Lexington.

fter the carriage pulled up to the home, Helm, then a little girl, hid behind her mother's skirt. She peeked ound to discover a funny-looking giant. He picked her up and began calling her "little sister." She adored him.

hey remained friends even after Helm's husband, Benjamin, joined the Confederacy. And, after her husband ed, understanding Abe let the widow stay in the White House despite security concerns of the Washington owd.

eady also heard how Mary Todd really didn't become difficult until one of her son's died.

t's just like she had a mental breakdown," Heady said.

ncoln also was troubled — a lonesome deep thinker who was unsure around women. In fact, he's said to have iled on his engagement to Mary Todd, only to take her back, feel guilty about it and never say no to her again.

s for Emilie Helm, she could talk to Abe about the area of the country that formed his earliest thoughts — with ometown accent to boot.

think he loved that," Heady said, "that she lived in Elizabethtown."

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Donna McCreary says in her researching the Todd relatives, she discovered that this photo of Emilie was taken in Madison IN in 18[illegible] to be used for printing her business cards.

REBEL IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Emilie Todd Helm was Mary Lincoln's half sister, the fifteenth of their father's sixteen children. Emilie, whom Lincoln called "Little Sister," was eighteen years younger than Mary and only seven years older than the Lincolns' son Robert.

Although Mary left their father's house when Emilie was three, she got to know the young woman later when she arrived for a visit at the Lincolns' Springfield home. There Emilie found that Mary "mothered her husband as she did her children, and he seemed very dependent on her."

In 1856 Emilie married West Point graduate Ben Hardin Helm. When war broke out in 1861, Lincoln offered him a Union command, but Helm joined the Confederate army instead and was killed at Chickamauga in 1863. Although Lincoln confided that he "did not wish it known," he invited the young widow and her daughter, Katherine, to the White House, where he and Mary greeted them with "the warmest affection."

But the visit soon became awkward. Emilie and Mary were unable to "open our hearts to each other as freely as we would like," Emilie confessed in her diary. When the wounded Union war hero General Dan Sickles heard she was resident in the Executive Mansion he went directly to Lincoln to complain, "You should not have that rebel in your house." Emilie left soon thereafter, armed with a presidential pass designed "to protect her against the mere fact of her being Gen. Helm's widow." Lincoln had to revoke it the following summer, saying he never intended "to protect her against the consequences of disloyal words or acts." Mrs. Helm responded with a bitter letter, reminding Lincoln "that your . . . *bullets*" had transformed her into "a woman almost crazed with misfortune." Emilie outlived even Robert, who kept this photograph of his aunt framed on the wall of his Vermont home.

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